THE

ROMAN HISTORY,

Mary IN A Blake

SERIES OF LETTERS,

Galway FROM A 1789

NOBLEMAN TO HIS SON.

Omnis homines, qui ſeſe ſtudent præſtare cæteris animalibus, ſumma ope niti decet, ne vitam ſilentio tranſeant, veluti pecora, quæ natura prona, atque ventri obedientia finxit. SALLUST.

VOL. I.

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THE EDITOR TO THE READER.

THAT curioſity which is peculiar to men in general will naturally induce many perſons to enquire who was the author of this work. The enquiry is, however, in its own nature, altogether inſignificant; for if the work is worthy of their approbation, then the merits of the author will ſtand unimpeached.

A work of a ſimilar nature was printed ſome years ago, (which gave riſe to the preſent) containing an account of the moſt material tranſactions that have happened in England; the reception it met with from the public was ſufficient credit to that author.

The Roman Hiſtorians have been time immemorial read in our ſchools, in detached pieces, and in ſuch a manner, as could give neither entertainment nor inſtruction to the

perſons who peruſed them. Here the author has laid before the reader the leading facts, and drawn ſuch concluſions from them as muſt make a laſting impreſſion on the memory of every perſon who peruſes it. Virtue is delineated in its moſt amiable characters, and vice ſo as to deter the riſing generation from becoming its votaries.

Upon the whole, if young gentlemen will attend to the reading of the Roman Hiſtory on the plan here laid down, they will acquire knowledge of things of the utmoſt importance.

THE

THE
ROMAN HISTORY,
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS.

LETTER I.

Dear Frederick,

YOUR birth entitled you to a liberal education; but when I ſent you to Cambridge along with Mr. P***. your worthy tutor, my deſign was to make you acquainted with human nature, as well as with books. There is no part of uſeful learning that I would have you unacquainted with. Logic will enbale you to judge with propriety, and reaſon with ſolidity. Geometry will enlarge the powers of your mind. Aſtronomy will preſent you with the dimenſions of the heavenly bodies, and fill your mind with wonder and reverence. Poetry will enliven your fancy; and philology will enable you to ſpeak with preciſion.

Indeed, it gives me real pleaſure to find, that you have not, like too many of your fellow ſtudents, ſpent your time in idleneſs. I am con-

vinced, from a perusal of the letters you sent me when I was at Paris, that your progress in learning has been great; nay, it has even exceeded my most sanguine hopes, and the pleasure I enjoy, can only be felt by a parent. With such accomplishments, I doubt not but you will one day make a distinguishing figure in the British senate, and preserve untainted, the honour of that family from which you are descended. Such, Frederick, are the hopes of an indulgent parent, whose sole ambition is to qualify you for your rank, that your actions may add a lustre to nobility. Such sciences as I have already mentioned, are the channels through which knowledge is conveyed to the human mind; but they are no more than channels, when compared to that ocean, into which every stream in the end flows. These introductions to knowledge may be called ornaments of the mind, and undoubtedly they are so; but the man who knows no more, can only be called a superficial scholar. He is like one who skims over the surface, without ever attempting to penetrate to the bottom.

There is a particular branch of knowledge that has perhaps not engaged your attention so much as it ought to have done; for it is absolutely necessary to make you acquainted with all the occurrences in life, and qualify you for the most important posts, that any nobleman can enjoy under the British government. The subject I mean, is history; and I will not hesitate one moment to declare, that the knowledge of the affairs in antient and modern times, is the highest qualification of any man, from the senator down to the mechanic.

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In conſequence of ſtudying hiſtory, the powers of the human mind become gradually enlarged, and while we are entertaining ourſelves with a ſeries of well-digeſted facts, we are at the ſame time led to ſearch for that principle in the human heart, which in its operations often produces effects, attended with conſequences, that fill ſucceeding ages with admiration. But notwithſtanding the utility of ſtudying hiſtory, and the vaſt advantages it is of in public life, yet the manner in which it is generally written, is both uſeleſs and diſguſting. The head is commonly ſtored with facts, but proper inferences are ſeldom drawn from them. It ſignifies little to be informed, that Hannibal paſſed the Alps, or that William, the Norman, conquered England; but it is of the utmoſt importance to know what motives induced thoſe illuſtrious heroes, to undertake expeditions, which undoubtedly were then looked upon as romantic. It is equally neceſſary to attend to the conſequences that attended ſuch important undertakings, and underſtand clearly what effects they had upon the conſtitutions of thoſe people, whoſe local ſituation was the object of their ambition. The knowledge of hiſtory is the knowledge of man; it preſents us with the actions of all ages and nations: it lays before us the advantages ariſing from one form of government, and the diſadvantages that follow another. Hiſtory preſents us with the vices of the worſt of men, and it repreſents virtue to us in its moſt amiable colours. It lays open the ſecret ſprings of government, and, in many inſtances, ſerves to illuſtrate divine providence. And let me aſſure you, that if you neglect ſo important a ſtudy, you will

then ſlight the nobleſt fountain of knowledge that ever can adorn the human underſtanding, and conſequently lead to the practice of virtue.

The ſtudy of hiſtory may be begun in the moſt early period of youth, as ſoon as a young perſon can read; and if thoſe who have the care of their education, cultivate their tender minds in a proper manner, knowledge will grow up with their years, to a full ſtate of maturity. It is indeed the fault of too many tutors, to inſinuate that youth are not able to go thro' ſuch ſtudies; but I am afraid this is rather a proof of their own ignorance. They are willing to teach their pupils the outlines of knowledge, but they have the utmoſt averſion to enter into the ſpirit of it. To this cauſe may be aſcribed that want of knowledge ſo conſpicuous among our young nobility. They can tell you when the battle of Pharſalia was fought, and at what time Xenophon retreated with the ten thouſand Greeks; but aſk them either the cauſes or the conſequences, and they cannot give you an anſwer. To have the mind loaded with facts, and no inferences drawn from them, is like one who eats more food than is conſiſtent with his conſtitution, becauſe it corrodes upon his ſtomach, and does not promote health. You may read too much, but at the ſame time you may learn too little, or even nothing at all. You may ſwallow with avidity the contents of books, and yet remain ignorant of the ſubjects contained in them.

I would have you to learn hiſtory, conſiſting of as many facts as are neceſſary to carry on the narrative, and to be enabled to make ſuch remarks upon each event, as will naturally improve your mind, and make you wiſer and better.

It is owing to the neglect of ſtudying hiſtory in this manner, that the moderns have fallen ſo very ſhort of the antients, in ſentiment, accuracy, and judgment. You have often admired the ſtrict exactneſs that runs through every period in Saluſt; the unadorned, though beautiful ſimplicity of Plutarch; the knowledge of human nature that runs through Polybius, and the glowing virtue of Xenophon. You cannot peruſe a chapter in Tacitus with ut acknowledging that he was qualified for the higheſt employment under the Roman government; and Quintus Curtius never fails to lead us as it were by the hand to the ſcene of action.

Such, my dear Frederick, are the works you have already peruſed, and it muſt be acknowledged, that your education would have been defective without an acquaintance with them. The valuable treaſures contained in them can never be treated with too much reſpect, but even the moſt accompliſhed of them are not without faults.

Xenophon has certainly given too large a ſcope to his imagination, and mixed fable with hiſtory. Tacitus and Polybius both lead us too much off from the narrative, to make room for their political reflections; and Plutarch is often harſh in many of his expreſſions. Livy, though copious, is often too credulous, and delivers many things that have nothing but tradition to ſupport them. Perfection, indeed, is not to be expected in any human compoſition; but ſurely there is a poſſibility of profiting by the faults of others. I would adviſe you to attend with the ſtricteſt aſſiduity to ſubjects of ſo much importance, and without be-

ing a ſlave to what has been written by the critics on the blemiſhes of the claſſic authors, endeavour to underſtand them yourſelf.

The many incidents of a ſtriking nature in the Roman Hiſtory, and in the hiſtories of thoſe nations whom they ſubdued, are ſo ſcattered up and down, that it is not an eaſy matter to reduce them into proper order. They are like the ſcattered materials, of which a fine ſtructure is built, but they are of little ſervice till the architect reduces them into proper order.

You have already peruſed the Hiſtory of England, written by a nobleman to his ſon at the univerſity, and you have often expreſſed the pleaſure you received from it. Indeed, it could not be otherwiſe; for ſurely hiſtory never aſſumed a more amiable form, than in that truly elegant compoſition. There a detail of facts are reduced into one continued and conſiſtent narrative, and while you admire the hiſtorian, you revere the philoſopher. You know, I have ſpent many years in the ſtudy of hiſtory, both as a ſcience, and an amuſement. I have not been ſo much concerned to enquire into the origin of nations, or to inveſtigate diſputed facts, as to find out cauſes, and make proper reflections upon their effects. In reading the hiſtories of different nations, I have ſet down what I thought worth notice, and I have left out all that appeared to me any way ſuperfluous; for human life is ſo ſhort, that it is enough for us to know what is good.

Ever ſince you went to the univerſity, I have ſpent my leiſure hours in adjuſting the materials which I had collected from different hiſtorians; and now I intend to preſent you with ſome of my thoughts

thoughts upon them. But then you muſt not imagine that I want to act the part of a Dogmatiſt, by ſetting down my own opinion as infallible. No, my dear Frederick, I do not look upon wiſdom as always connected with advanced years; and if I know any thing of my own heart, I can freely aſſert, that I could rather wiſh to receive inſtruction from you, than to be under any neceſſity of conveying it.

You are too dear to me, to ſuffer jealouſy to take place in my mind on account of your ſuperior abilities, and while I make any remarks to your ſatisfaction, give me your approbation; but if not, let me beg that nothing of an ill-timed modeſty may prevent you from pointing out wherein I have any way been miſtaken, which will give me more pleaſure than I am able to expreſs.

LETTER II.

Dear Frederick,

THE remarks you made in your laſt letter concerning the Roman Hiſtory, are certainly extremely juſt, and I am glad to find that your time has not been ſpent in idleneſs, like too many of our young nobility, while they are at the univerſity, and who only go there in order to obtain a diploma, without having any title to it.

Univerſal hiſtory is too much for the human underſtanding to comprehend, and by far too much for the memory to retain. Indeed, many parts of it are not worth reading, becauſe they neither afford inſtruction or entertainment; ſo that thoſe who would acquire real knowledge,

muſt confine their ſtudies to the moſt eſſential ſubjects. Not but you may take every opportunity of making yourſelf acquainted with as many parts of Univerſal Hiſtory, as will ſerve to give you general ideas of ſo important a ſubject, but to deſcend to particulars is utterly impoſſible.

The Roman Hiſtory, according to the remarks you have already made upon it, contains ſuch a ſeries of important events, as are not to be met with in the hiſtory of any people whatever. Glory was the ſtimulating motive to action, and their heroes became great, while they looked upon themſelves as no more than members of the republic, in common with the meaneſt individuals. The love of their country enabled them to ſurmount every difficulty, notwithſtanding their formidable appearance; and from low beginnings, the Romans aroſe to be the conquerors of the world; nay, they even boaſted that the ſun roſe and ſet in their dominion. From the Euphrates to the Atlantic, and from the Nile to the German ocean, their eagles were diſplayed.

The Roman Hiſtory is extremely dark during the time it was ſubject to kings; for the period is remote, and many of the facts are no way intereſting. Some, however, ought to be attended to, and I will venture to affirm, that you will never thoroughly underſtand the hiſtory of that illuſtrious empire, unleſs you trace their actions to the fountain head.

The ſtudy of the Roman Hiſtory has been compared by a great man to a voyage on the Nile. If we begin at the Delta, we are led into ſo many windings, that we cannot diſcern the beauties of that

that celebrated river; but if we go above the ſecond cataract, where there is but a ſmall quantity of water, and continue ſailing downward, we ſhall not only be able to trace out all its different turnings, but likewiſe to make proper remarks upon every thing that occurs to us, whether on the river, or the circumjacent land.

In the ſame manner, if we begin the ſtudy of the Roman Hiſtory, at the time when we firſt met with any genuine, or well atteſted accounts of thoſe people, and follow it down thro' all its various revolutions, we will become acquainted with the whole, and our ideas will be enlarged in conſequence of the extent of their conqueſts. We are naturally fond of variety, and ſurely no ſubject in the world is better calculated to gratify our curioſity. It preſents us with thouſands of images that we could never have conceived in our imagination; and while we behold a people extending their conqueſts abroad, we are ſurpriſed to think how, in ſuch a ſacred manner, they preſerved their liberties at home.

Every ſentiment, whether of admiration or indignation, ariſes in our mind, when we ſee diſplayed before us characters of a totally oppoſite nature. We admire the benevolence of a Scipio, the diſintereſtedneſs of a Cinna, the wiſdom of a Fabius, and the humanity of a Titus. On the other hand, we are filled with indignation at the crimes of a Tarquin, the uxorioufneſs of a Mark Antony, the boaſted pretenſions to valour in a Caligula, and the unprecedented cruelty of a Nero.

But the thread of the Hiſtory is not all, we are alſo obliged to attend to many collateral circumſtances; we are to enquire by what means a poor

handful of men, or rather a banditti, raiſed themſelves to the government of the world; and alſo, when they had obtained that deſired end, how they became ſo eaſily a prey to the barbarians, who ſurrounded them. We muſt enquire into that ſpirit, which, during the continuance of the commonwealth, made the people reſpectable, and how they came to deliver up their freedom ſo tamely. We muſt attend to the different changes that took place while the commonwealth was the form of government in Rome, and how the conſtitution was affected thereby, as leading either to liberty or ſlavery.

Another queſtion will naturally occur, namely, how could Cæſar ſo eaſily ſet aſide a form of government that had exiſted many centuries, and trample on the laws of his country as well as the privileges of his fellow citizens, without ever being called to an account, till he was aſſaſſinated in an illegal manner in the capital.

But the moſt ſtriking thing in the Roman Hiſtory, is, what is peculiar to all mankind, namely, the love of liberty, the glorious privilege to which all our fellow creatures are entitled. All mankind are by nature equal, and, altho' conſiſtent with the nature of ſociety, ſubordination muſt take place in an official manner, yet the ſame right remains as the inherent claim of every individual, ſo far as his intereſt can ſtand connected with the good of the whole community. The generals under the commonwealth of Rome, ſought no higher reward for the difficulties they ſtruggled with, or the dangers they underwent, than the approbation of their fellow citizens. They returned from an expedition, conſcious of having done their duty.

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They laid down their commiſſions, and, however they might wiſh for applauſe, yet they did not ſeek it in any other manner than what was common, namely, the ſuffrage of the people. They preferred the public approbation to every thing; they ſought nothing farther, and when they obtained it, they were ſtimulated to undertake conqueſts of a more dangerous and important nature. They had no regard for pecuniary emoluments, for ſo far as they ſerved their country, and promoted the intereſts of the republic, ſo far did they conſider themſelves as intitled to reſpect, but they took thoſe rewards from the ſentiments of the community at large.

Thus, my dear Frederick, I have pointed out to you a few of the out-lines of the Roman Hiſtory, and I am glad to find that in ſome inſtances you have not been negligent in making ſome very pertinent remarks upon what you have read in the claſſic authors. I have not the leaſt doubt but by proper cultivation your mind will be ſo far improved as to underſtand every thing neceſſary to qualify you for diſcharging your duty, as a peer of Great Britain; but you will excuſe me if I make ſome remarks on what you wrote to me in your laſt.

I do not deſire to find fault, it is contrary to my natural diſpoſition, and I can aſſure you that whatever your remarks may be, I can ſincerely wiſh rather to ſee them, than to find that you had never attended to any part of learning whatever. For I think that when a man forms notions on any ſubject in hiſtory, and ſubmits the diſcuſſion of them to another perſon, it is at leaſt a proof that he has thought on the ſubject, which is more than many others do, and at the ſame time it is a proof of his-

his humility; becauſe he ſeems deſirous of receiving inſtruction.

Your ſending your opinion to me is a proof of your filial duty, and as I love you as a parent ought to do a child, give me leave to point out to you wherein I think you are either right or wrong. I have nothing but your intereſt and benefit in view, and therefore do not imagine that I am to act the part of an imperious dictator, who is deſtitute of bowels of compaſſion.

You ſay that both Scipio and Julius Cæſar were heroes; but you have not made any difference whatever between the characters of thoſe great men. You ſeem to imagine that they were both equally entitled to the approbation of all mankind, but you have aſſigned no reaſon for that aſſertion.

I will tell you, Frederick, and in ſome of my future letters I will make it evident to you, that their characters were different, except in that of courage, which diſtinguiſhed them both, in a very conſpicuous manner. Scipio, as the ſervant of his fellow-citizens, overthrew the commonwealth of Carthage; Cæſar, like an ambitious tyrant, trampled on the rights of the Roman people. The one was the ſervant of the public, the other ſet all public laws at defiance. Scipio fought to enlarge the dominions of his country; Cæſar fought to enſlave his fellow-citizens. Again you take notice that Numa Pompillius, and Juſtinian, ought to be held in the ſame eſteem. I differ from you, Frederick, and I will aſſign my reaſons.

Numa Pompillius aſcended the throne of Rome when the people were little better than barbarians.

barbarians. He compoſed for their uſe a ſimple code of laws, ſuitable to the manners of the people in a rude age, but according to the improvement of manners they were refined from time to time.

On the other hand, the Emperor Juſtinian lived at a time when the laws were brought to a ſtate of perfection, and he only collected into one body what had been written by many others, before. Numa Pompilius was the legiſlator of a few people; he formed rules for the political formation of a ſociety, in order to promote their intereſt, and make them more civil in their manners. On the other hand Juſtinian collected all the laws together, and having cut off ſuch as were for the benefit of the ſubject, he ſubſtituted in their room very iniquitous inſtitutions. The firſt was the father of his people, the latter was a deſigning tyrant, who wanted to trample on the liberty of the ſubject.

Such, my dear Frederick, are the remarks I would make upon your letter, and I hope you will acknowledge that they are right. You know that I have ſpent many years in ſtudying the Roman Hiſtory, and all I deſire is, that you may not be led aſide by popular prejudices. It ſignifies little to hear of the character of a Cæſar unleſs that character will bear the teſt of a public enquiry. In the ſame manner you muſt endeavour to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who have the approbation of the public, and thoſe who endeavour to aggrandize themſelves at the expence of their fellow-citizens, by trampling on their laws, liberties, privileges, and the whole of their conſtitution in government.

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The Roman Hiſtory in general may be divided into three periods, viz. the reign of the kings, the common-wealth, and that of the emperors. The firſt is like the dawn of the morning, the ſecond like the noon day, and the laſt may well be compared to the evening. The firſt is childhood, the ſecond is manhood, and the third is old age. In the firſt we are obliged to ſtruggle through a variety of difficulties, in the ſecond light ſhines upon us, and in the laſt we ſee the ſun leave our lower hemiſphere.

In that manner, Frederick, I would have you to conſider the Roman Hiſtory, and therefore let me beg that for the future you will attend to all the inſtructions that I ſhall lay down to you in my letters. I ſhall give you the out-lines of the Roman Hiſtory, and as I go on with the narrative, I ſhall make ſuch remarks as I think proper, in order to regulate your judgment. I am ſure I have your intereſt at heart, and the method I have laid down cannot fail to make you wiſer and better. If you will but attend to it, you will find that I have been at no ſmall pains to make you acquainted with all the beauties and blemiſhes in the Roman Hiſtory, and from a variety of materials, I have ſelected ſomething for your improvement.

LETTER III.

IT is too common, my dear Frederick, to hear youth ſpeaking diſreſpectfully of old age, and yet for all that I cannot find that people in general deſire to die young. No, they want to live as long as poſſible in the world, and one would

would think that if this wiſh is gratified, they muſt be convinced that old age will overtake them. Perhaps you may be ſurpriſed at my taking notice of this foible while I am writing a ſeries of letters on hiſtory, but I do aſſure you, I think the obſervation is altogether applicable to the opinions embraced by many different authors concerning the antiquity of the nations wherein they live.

There is not a nation in the univerſe that does not pretend to a much higher origin than can be juſtified or ſupported by the evidence of credible writers. The Chineſe tell us they have had a regular ſucceſſion of kings for no leſs than twenty-four thouſand years; Jeffery of Monmouth has traced the genealogy of the Engliſh up to the general deluge, and the Iriſh antiquarians that they might not be behind him in fabulous conjectures, have told us that they had kings before the flood.

The Romans, in conformity with the opinions of other nations have given us a long detail of their being deſcended from Æneas the Trojan, but this ſeems to have been done with a view of concealing the meanneſs from whence they ſprung. Indeed the thought is extremely natural, for what man can bear to be reproached with meanneſs of birth, if he can make any claim to a higher origin.

The ſtory of Æneas landing at the mouth of the Tiber, and engaging with Turnus king of the Rutuli, is not only a fable invented by the Romans, but it alſo ſtands reprobated by all the modern criticks, who have written notes on the claſſic authors. Livy, as well as many other Roman writers, tell us, that Æneas built a city

which

which he called Lavinium, in honour of Lavinia, his wife: but after a reign of four years he was defeated and ſlain in battle by Mezentius, one of the petty kings who reigned over a diſtrict in the ſame neighbourhood. We are farther told, that Aſcanius the ſon of Æneas ſucceeded him in the regal government of Rome, or as it was then called Alba, and after his death, Silvius, the ſon of Æneas by Lavinia, obtained the regal dignity.

The ſucceſſion of kings that followed according to the Roman chronology is ſo inveloped in fable, that no perſon ought to ſpend time in enquiring into their characters, for it is preſumed that they never exiſted but in the imagination of poets, and fabulous hiſtorians. The treaſures that had been brought from Troy were ſtill preſerved, if we believe the teſtimony of thoſe writers, and therefore it was not unnatural for ſome one or other to have a jealous eye upon them. The laſt king deſcended from Silvius was Numitor, and he took poſſeſſion of the throne in conſequence of his father's will. He had a brother named Amulus, to whom his father had bequeathed the Trojan riches; and as is natural in ſuch caſes, he endeavoured to turn thoſe riches to his own advantage. In conſequence of that reſolution he dethroned his brother, and took the government upon himſelf, after having murdered him. He then murdered the children of his brother, and there being only one daughter remaining, he obliged her to become one of the Veſtal Virgins, by which ſhe was forever excluded from human ſociety, and ſhut up in a recluſe ſtate, during the

the remainder of her life, for ſhe was condemned to a perpetual celibacy.

Rhea Silvia, the young lady whom he had cauſed to be ſhut up in this manner, being one day going to fetch water from a well in the neighbourhood, was met by a man who raviſhed her, and in order to make herſelf appear the leſs culpable, ſhe ſaid that the perſon who deflowered her was Mars the God of War. In the ordinary courſe of time ſhe was delivered of twins, both boys, and the uſurper devoted them to deſtruction; for the mother, according to the laws for preſerving the chaſtity of Veſtal Virgins, was condemned to be buried alive, and the children were ordered to be flung into the Tiber. Providence, however, reſcued the children from deſtruction, for at that time the river had overflowed its banks, and where they were thrown in the place was ſo far from the main current, that there was not water ſufficient to drown them. They remained in the water till the flood had ſubſided, and then, as we are told by Livy, Fauſtulus, the king's herdſman, happened to ſee them ſucking a wolf, and in compaſſion took them home to Acca Laurentia, his wife, who brought them up as her own children, without ever enquiring to whom they belonged.

The twins thus preſerved were named Romulus and Remus, and when they grew up they began to diſcover ſomething that indicated them to be of a very high origin. The ſhepherd ordered them to attend his flocks, but inſtead of doing ſo, they uſed to ſally forth and take from all the robbers, whom they met, the booty that they had unjuſtly acquired, all which they

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ſhared among the reſt of the ſhepherds. While they were going on in this manner, Remus was taken priſoner, and carried before the king; and Romulus, who, by this time, had got ſome account of his birth, aſſembled a vaſt number of ſhepherds in order to reſcue his brother, and wreſt the regal authority from the hands of an uſurper, who had mounted the throne without any legal right to the ſovereignty. The uſurper being thus beſet on every ſide, knew not which way to turn himſelf, and while he was thinking of proper methods to be uſed in order to extricate himſelf out of his difficulties, he was taken priſoner, and put to death. In conſequence thereof, Numitor, who had been depoſed upwards of forty years, was reſtored to the throne; and then he not only recognized his two grandſons, but alſo took them into favour.

This revolution having taken plaee, and Numitor being once more placed upon the throne in his old age, his nephews propoſed building a city on the hills where they formerly lived as ſhepherds. In a deſign of ſo much importance they were encouraged by the king, who was not inſenſible of the many obligations he lay under to them, and therefore he gave them land ſufficient for their ſupport, which, by proper cultivation, would enable them not only to build the city, but alſo to find employment for ſuch as thought proper to inhabit it. He gave leave to all his ſubjects who had any intention of changing their place of abode, to go and ſettle there; and in a ſhort time, moſt of the ſhepherds, who were fond of changing, joined themſelves and his cauſe. Indeed, the new ſettlers

tlers flocked in ſuch numbers, that it was found expedient to put them under proper reſtriction, ſo as to act in ſuch a manner as ſhould promote the intended deſign, without infringing on their natural rights, or trampling upon thoſe privileges to which mankind are intitled. Rules and orders of that nature are abſolutely neceſſary, and the man who is not willing to ſubmit to them, ought to retire from ſociety.

While they were going on in this manner, a diſpute aroſe concerning the ground upon which the city was to be built; nor could the diſpute be ſettled, till, conſiſtent with the ſuperſtitious notions of that age, they agreed to have recourſe to the omens ariſing from the flight of birds. The contending parties took their ſtations on two hills oppoſite to each other; but when the flight of birds took place, neither were ſatisfied; and we are even told, that a battle enſued, in which Remus was ſlain; and Romulus jumping over the place marked out for the city, declared that no perſon for the future ſhould ever do ſo with impunity.

So far, my dear Frederick, you muſt conſider what I have now told you, and what you have often read, as no better than oral tradition, inveloped in fable, and obſcured by the poets. You have read the accounts of them in the claſſic authors, but you muſt take this along with you, that nothing is to be believed unleſs it is ſupported by a proper evidence. Theſe accounts of the origin of the Romans, are ſcarce worth the reading, were it not that they lead us to trace the ſtream from its ſource.

Romulus, we are told built a city, and it was upon the ſame hill where he had received the favourable

favourable omen, and he encloſed it with walls, prognoſticating that it ſhould one day give laws to the whole world.

The word city, according to our common notion, conveys an idea of grandeur along with it; but this cannot with any propriety be applied to the ſubject I have been now writing of.

By the word city in thoſe times, was meant no more than a parcel of cottages joined together, and by walls we are to underſtand the ditches and hedges thrown up, in order to prevent the common enemy from making any depredations upon them.

The city of Rome, when firſt built, was no more than a parcel of poor humble cottages joined together, and the walls, which make ſuch a mighty figure in antient hiſtory, were no more than a few earthen entrenchments, thrown up for the ſecurity of the inhabitants, who lived by plunder, and in a great meaſure, neglected agriculture. The changes that took place in their government, will be attended to in ſome of my ſubſequent letters, and I ſhall be glad to hear that you know the Roman Hiſtory.

LETTER IV.

IT is impoſſible for a collective body of people to live together without being bound down to ſome rule of duty; and the object of that rule muſt, in a primary ſenſe, be the intereſt of the whole community; and, in a ſecondary ſenſe, the happineſs of every individual, ſo far as he can be conſidered connected with the body politic. Among rude people, laws are at firſt weak, but they gain ſtrength in proportion to the increaſe of commerce,

commerce, and the refinements of manners. In rude ages, the letter is ſtrictly adhered to, but in more enlightened and refined ages, the ſpirit and tendency becomes the object of enquiry at the bar, and determination on the bench.

It is well known, my dear Frederick, that all power muſt naturally flow from the people, and therefore as ſoon as the banditti, who followed Romulus had built their city, they made an agreement, that his power, as a ſovereign, ſhould be partly abſolute, and partly limited.

The whole executive power was committed to Romulus, and whenever he went abroad in ſolemn proceſſion, he was attended both by his guard and executioners, who were called Lictors; all which was done in order to impreſs upon the minds of the people, a proper notion of his dignity. He was not, however, to make any new laws without calling the people together, by the majority of whoſe votes, every thing was to be regulated, either in declaring war or concluding a treaty of peace. The body of the people, or rather the ſenate, were alſo to appoint all ſuch officers as acted under him, and to them they were to give an exact account in what manner they diſcharge their duty.

At firſt the whole body of people compoſed the ſenate; but as it was found neceſſary that many of them ſhould attend to agriculture, in order to procure a ſubſiſtance, one hundred of the principal ones were made choice of, as deputies entruſted with plenary powers to act in the name of the others. Theſe hundred men were ſuch as their fellow citizens looked upon as moſt celebrated for their wiſdom; and when war was declared, the prince appointed the oldeſt as his deputy, to act

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in his ſtead during his abſence. The king always ſet as preſident when the ſenate was aſſembled; but he had no power to dictate; for when the queſtion was propoſed, after each had given his opinion upon it, the names were called over, and the majority always carried it. It was natural to ſuppoſe, that ſuch men would have the intereſt of their country in view above every thing elſe, and therefore the people out of reſpect to them, called them fathers. From this circumſtance we muſt date the origin of that order among the Roman people, called Patricians, to whom belonged, in conſequence of their being deſcended from thoſe fathers, all the great officers of ſtate, as well as the prieſthood, while the heathen religion was profeſſed by the Romans. The lower rank of people, whoſe anceſtors had never been ſenators, were entitled to honour, not on account of their birth, but only their merit; either by ſignalizing themſelves in any remarkable engagement, or by wiſdom and prudence, promoting the intereſt of their country while they were at home, in attending to the arts of peace.

The third order of the people was the plebians, and although the loweſt, yet their power was greater than that of any of the other two. They were conſidered as the fountain of power; for in all popular elections, a negative could not be put upon their vote. The plebians gave their conſent to the election of a prince, and alſo to the election of all thoſe who were to be ſenators; the ſenators took care to preſerve the laws, and the prince was obliged to ſee them faithfully executed. Each of theſe three orders was a check on the other, and that jealouſy ſo peculiar to the human ſpecies, kept alive ſentiments of liberty in the minds of the

the people. Romulus, while he was making ſtatutes for the good government of the people, did not neglect the intereſt of religion, but endeavoured to enforce obedience to human laws, from the belief of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments.

He knew that nothing has a more powerful influence on the human mind than futurity, and he was convinced that the belief of a heaven and a hell are ſtronger ſtimulatives to duty than any thing that can be mentioned. It is impoſſible, at this diſtance of time to aſcertain, with preciſion, what the religion of the Romans conſiſted of, but certain it is that they had low, mean and vulgar notions both of God as an infinite Being, and of his providence, by which the affairs of this lower world are conducted. They placed every ſort of confidence in impoſtors, who pretended to foretell future events by looking at the entrails of animals, and examining the flight of birds; in all which they were encouraged by Romulus, who ordered that no enterprize of any importance ſhould be undertaken without their directions.

Many laws were enacted in that age when Romulus lived, but few of them have been tranſmitted to us except in the works of thoſe who lived in a ſubſequent period. From what we can learn of thoſe times, ſome of them were conſiſtent with the barbarity of the age and place in which the legiſlator lived. Thus, a father had a right to ſell his child as a ſlave, or if he was born with any natural deformity, he might expoſe him to wild beaſts to be devoured by them, upon condition that he obtained the conſent of his five neareſt relations. If a woman committed

committed adultery, the huſband had it in his power either to put her away from him, or to take her life in whatever manner he thought proper.

Such laws will always be looked upon as inhuman and barbarous among thoſe people who live in a civilized age; but they ought to conſider they were made by barbarians. I know that you, Frederick, have read the writings of the celebrated Fenelon, and you can well remember that he ſays the Romans in their moſt civilized ſtate were not much better than the ſavages near the Cape of Good Hope.

No man has a right by nature over another; and as we are all by nature entitled to the ſame privileges, ſo no perſon has a right to deprive us of them, unleſs we forfeit our title to the protection of that ſociety of which we are members. In civil ſociety no man has a right to diſpoſe of his child in the manner already mentioned, becauſe that child is a member of the community; and as to that horrid practice of putting women to death, were it to be tolerated, it would transfer the power of the civil magiſtrate to every individual, without giving the injured perſon an opportunity of ſpeaking in her own defence.

Such was the infancy of the Roman ſtate, that in ſubſequent ages made ſo great a figure in the world, but then it muſt be attended to, that there were not full four thouſand men, and only a few women. It is well known that no ſtate can ſubſiſt long unleſs the number of the ſubjects daily increaſe; and as many people from the neighbouring country thought proper to ſettle in the new colony, ſo it was found neceſ-

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ſary to look out for wives for them, in order to propagate new inhabitants.

The Sabines, the moſt warlike people in Italy, had territories adjoining to Rome, and as they were exceeding populous, Romulus ſent meſſages to their chiefs, deſiring to conclude an alliance with them, upon condition that they would ſuffer their daughters to marry the young men in the new city. The Sabines received the propoſal with diſdain, and treated the perſons who brought it with peculiar marks of diſreſpect. They ſaid, "That as Romulus had eſtabliſhed an aſylum "for a body of robbers, he ought at the ſame "to have ſet the gates of his new city open for "the moſt abandoned proſtitutes, and then his "ſubjects would ſoon have women in plenty." From this incident, my dear Frederick, you will be able to draw a parallel line between thoſe times, and the manners of the age in which we now live. Pride was then as predominant as at preſent, and altho' the manner of operation may be different, yet the motives were the ſame.

No ſooner had the meſſengers communicated the anſwer of the Sabines to Romulus, and intimated in what manner they had been treated, than he reſolved to take an ample revenge, and at the ſame time promote the intereſt of his new colony. From this you may learn, that he was a wiſe legiſlator, becauſe he had the intereſt of his ſubjects at heart: and although the political conduct of a prince may be ſuch, that it will not admit of an examination conſiſtent with the rules of ſtrict morality, yet while his intention is to do good to the whole ſociety, we ought to draw a veil over his imperfections, let them be ever ſo glaring or numerous.

Having conſulted with the ſenators, he ordered proclamation to be made throughout all the neighbouring villages, that he was to celebrate a feaſt to Neptune, who, by his ſovereign power, preſided over the ſeas. Pleaſure is of a bewitching nature; for altho' the Sabines hated the Romans, yet they were among the firſt who honoured the feaſt with their company. They brought their wives and daughters along with them, in order to partake of the entertainment; and the Romans treated them with every mark of reſpect as well as hoſpitality. This, however, was only a pretence to cover their real deſign; for barbarians are no more deſtitute of cunning, than thoſe who look upon themſelves as the moſt enlightened beings in the univerſe.

While they were engaged in all ſorts of diverſions conſiſtent with the manners of the people, the young Romans ruſhed in among the Sabine women, and ſeized ſuch as they thought moſt handſome and beautiful. The parents remonſtrated againſt the Romans for ſuch a flagrant breach of hoſpitality; the virgins inſiſted upon their honour as women, but the raviſhers were powerful, and in conſequence of their having obtained all that ſatisfaction they ſo ardently wiſhed for, thoſe who were their enemies became their friends, and the women whom they had deflowered, were their moſt powerful advocates.

Their parents, however, did not ſo tamely put up with the injury done to their daughters: for a moſt bloody war enſued; but Romulus, in the end, became triumphant over all his enemies. In ſuch of the towns as he conquered, he placed colonies of his own ſubjects, partly to enlarge the power of the commonwealth, and partly to prevent

vent the neighbouring nations from making inroads into his dominions. This was certainly a wiſe precaution, and what ought to be attended to by every conqueror who wants to ſecure what he has obtained. It ſignifies little to ſpread devaſtation throughout every part of the habitable world, and lay whole kingdoms waſte, unleſs the intention of the hero is to make the people more happy than they were before. His new conqueſts ought to be as much the object of his attention, as thoſe to which he had an hereditary right.

Many of the Sabine princes conſidered the conduct of the Romans as the higheſt indignity that could have been offered to them as free-born ſubjects, and Tatius, king of Cures, one of the Sabine cities, entered the territory, under the command or government of Romulus, at the head of a large body of men.

Tatius was a man of courage, but to courage he was obliged to add ſtratagem, which every commander ought to make his principal ſtudy. While he was ruminating in his mind how to execute ſuch an important ſcheme as he had formed, he approached the gates of the city, where the governor of capitaline reſided, and his daughter Tarpiea came out for ſome water. Having her thus in his power, he prevailed upon her to conduct him, with his men, into the city, and in reward for that, ſhe was to have the bracelets the ſoldiers wore upon their arms. Mercenary, however, as ſhe was, her reward was given to her in a manner ſhe little expected; for when the ſoldiers entered the city, they threw down their bucklers in ſuch numbers, that they fell upon her, and ſhe was cruſhed to death. Thus you may ſee in what manner ingratitude and perfidy are generally rewarded, for who would

truſt that perſon with any thing of a private nature, who ſeeks, for the ſake of a pecuniary emolument, an opportunity to betray the rights of his fellow ſubjects.

LETTER V.

IN the courſe of a war, when one party has obtained the leaſt advantage over the other, it generally encreaſes the animoſity, and makes them more bitter enemies than they were before. Many ſkirmiſhes happened between them, which exhauſted their numbers in ſuch a manner, that after each party had done all that lay in their power to ſupport their prerogatives, both were glad to ſolicit for peace.

This reſolution, however, was not agreeable to many of the leading men, and therefore it was propoſed that the war ſhould be terminated by a general engagement. For ſome time the engagement was renewed with equal vigour on both ſides, and ſuch was the antipathy that each party bore to the other, that it was not decided for ſeveral days. Life, liberty and property, were the objects they had in view, and therefore there is not the leaſt reaſon to doubt but they would exert themſelves in the moſt vigorous manner.

While both parties were endeavouring to deſtroy each other by the ſword, thoſe who had been the undeſigned occaſion of all the miſchief, ſtept forth as the moſt powerful mediators. The Sabine women, who were now the wives of the Romans, and who loved their huſbands from motives of natural affection, came into the camp with their

their hair diſhevelled, and cried out, "that if "they were reſolved upon ſlaughter, then they "ought to turn their ſwords againſt them, becauſe "if their parents and huſbands were to die, life "would not be of great value to them."

This was undoubtedly a moſt ſhocking ſpectacle, and the more ſo, as both parties were concerned in it; the Sabines for their daughters, and the Romans for their wives. For ſome time they ſtood in ſilent amazement, looking at each other, not knowing what to ſay, till one of the commanders ſtepped forth and made the following propoſals, namely, that Romulus and Tatius ſhould reign as joint ſovereigns, and that there ſhould an equal number of Sabines admitted into the ſenate as Romans. By theſe means, all animoſities were amicably healed; the different pretenſions of the contending parties were ſettled, and prudence triumphed over paſſion and reſentment.

Weak indeed were the firſt attempts made by theſe people, and poſſibly at that time they had no thoughts that ever their ſucceſſors would extend their conqueſts through every part of the then known world; but that Divine Being, who had pointed them out as a people who were to be great in ſubſequent ages, made every thing turn out to their advantage. At that time they were utterly ignorant of their own importance; but they roſe to grandeur in the ſame manner as a ſtream does, after it flows from the fountain head. Every thing that ſeemed to retard their progreſs to univerſal empire, only ſerved to promote it; and thoſe who were their profeſſed enemies in the beginning, became their real friends, although they never deſigned to do ſo.

It was agreed upon by the contending parties, that both the Romans and the Sabines ſhould be incorporated into one body, and therefore thoſe who fought in the morning were friends at night. Thus you ſee, that a war undertaken upon principles of revenge, was terminated from motives ariſing from benevolence. The contending parties were connected by the moſt ſacred ties of nature; and nature, which ſhuddered both at thethoughts of their butchering each other, induced them to enter into a friendly ſociety, as rational creatures together.

Romulus was now extremely happy; for Tatius being killed in conſequence of a diſpute ariſing between his ſervants and ſome of the Lavinians, he remained ſole maſter of the government of Rome. The Romans, or rather the banditti under his command, continued to plunder the neighbouring villages, and took ſeveral of them, by which means Rome increaſed in power as well as territory. Indeed, Romulus was too proud to confine himſelf to rules as laid down by his conſtituents; for he attempted to make himſelf abſolute, notwithſtanding the obligation he was under to act conſiſtent with the laws.

Thus you ſee, my dear Frederick, how power intoxicates men; for the perſon who only receives a ſimple delegation to act with limited authority, will aſpire to the privilege of domineering over his fellow-creatures; and if no perſon of ſpirit ſtands up to oppoſe him, he will, in the end, make himſelf, to all intents and purpoſes, an arbitrary tyrant.

The ſucceſs that attended all the undertakings of Romulus, and his abuſe of delegated power, began

began to alarm the ſenate, who looked upon themſelves as the guardians of the ſtate, inſtituted with plenary powers, to act in ſuch a manner as would in the end promote its ſafety. The ſenators were the real fathers of the people; for they conſidered the meaneſt ſubject as their fellow-citizen, and his intereſt connected with theirs. They knew that they had made choice of him to be their king; they had cloathed him with the regal dignity, in order that he ſhould govern according to the laws, but no ſooner did they ſee him ſet himſelf above thoſe laws that were made for the good of the whole community, than they conſidered him as an arbitrary tyrant, and reſolved to take a moſt ample revenge.

The claſſic authors have given us different accounts of the manner in which he was put to death; ſome telling us that he was torn in pieces by wild beaſts, and others, that he was taken up into heaven. However, the truth ſeems to be as follows: Romulus had, in the moſt ſcandalous manner, abuſed his authority which the ſenate had granted him over the people, and they, in order to ſupport their privileges as men, conſpired together to put him to death. Undoubtedly this was tranſacted in a very private manner, and poſſibly on account of that privacy we are left much in the dark concerning this important tranſaction.

The ſenators built a temple to the memory of Romulus, becauſe his illuſtrious actions had made him the idol of the people. This was a moſt excellent ſcheme, and it ſhews that political knowledge is the ſame in all ages, and that thoſe who direct the affairs of government, whether in a ſovereign or ſubordinate capacity, ought always to conſult the inclinations of the people.

It is impoſſible, at this diſtance of time, to ſay much concerning the character of Romulus. Like the other inhabitants of Italy in that age, he was undoubtedly a barbarian. His natural parts muſt, however, have been great, or he could never have formed a ſociety compoſed of robbers, and actually brought them under ſubjection to human laws. He laid the foundation of the greateſt empire that ever exiſted in the world; and although his territories as a ſovereign were ſmall, and his power contracted into very narrow bounds, yet his name ſeems to carry as much dignity along with it as either a Pompey or a Cæſar.

Romulus being dead, great diſputes aroſe between the plebians and the ſenators, concerning the election of a new king; the people inſiſting upon regal government, and the ſenators to have the power wholly into their own hands. Theſe diſputes continued the ſpace of one year, during which time the ſenators in their turn ſupplied the place of the king, by taking the regal dignity upon themſelves, each of whom enjoyed it five days at a time. A government of ſuch an unſettled nature, gave great offence to the plebians, who, inſtead of one tyrant, had a whole body of pretended maſters to ſubmit to. They inſiſted on having a new king elected; but diſputes aroſe whether he ſhould be choſen from among the Romans or the Sabines, or who ſhould have the power of election, whether the ſenate or the people. At laſt, it was agreed that the people ſhould be inveſted with the power of election, and that the Romans and the Sabines might be the more firmly united, the former were to chuſe a king from among the latter. Accordingly they made choice

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of Numa Pompilius, a Sabine, a man of great piety, wiſdom, and courage.

He was then a little above forty years of age, and his virtues had made ſuch a conſpicuous figure, that he was greatly admired by the Romans and the Sabines. He accepted the regal dignity rather with a deſign to ſerve his country, than with any view of aggrandizing himſelf. He had not been long on the throne, when he reſolved to ſoften as much as poſſible the ferocious diſpoſitions and manners of his people, who were then compoſed of ſeveral different tribes. He was much addicted to the religion then profeſſed among the people of Italy, and his example had a ſtrong influence upon his ſubjects. Temples were built in almoſt every part of his dominions, and to give the greater appearence of ſanctity to all his actions, he pretended to keep up a correſpondence with the goddeſs Ægeria, by whoſe orders he built the temple of Janus, and made a law that it ſhould be opened when war was declared, and that as ſoon as peace was concluded, it was to be ſhut.

He gave great encouragement to agriculture, by dividing the lands that the Romans had taken, among the poorer ſort of people, whom he obliged to live in a friendly manner together.

In that glorious manner he reigned till he was upwards of eighty years of age, and left his ſubjects powerful and happy. When he lay on his death-bed, he ordered that his body ſhould be put into a ſtone coffin, along with ſuch books as he had uſed in his devotions, and to be depoſited in a place near the ſenate. During his reign, there was a dreadful plague among his people, upon which he revived the order of the Salian, a ſort

of muſicians who ſing in the temples at the ſacrifices. They were diſtinguiſhed by an embroidered coat and a tranſparent breaſt-plate, and they were obliged to ſing when they went in proceſſion along the ſtreets.

He alſo eſtabliſhed the orders of prieſts to perform the daily ſacrifices, and gave them written rules for their conduct. So great was the fame of this prince, both as a legiſlator and a governor, that the neighbouring nations admired his conduct and imitated his example. That the people might be brought over from all ſorts of diſhoneſty, he built a temple to the goddeſs BONA FIDES, or Good Faith, and officiated therein as prieſt himſelf. This had ſuch an effect upon the peoples minds, that when they were called upon to give evidence in a Court of Judicature, the judges took their bare affirmation inſtead of an oath.

From his example you may ſee, my dear Frederick, what a good prince can do. He did not teach his people one thing and do another himſelf; but his whole conduct was conſiſtent with his precepts; ſo that in order to be good ſubjects, they had no more to do than to copy after the king. He was in every reſpect the father of his people, and he reigned as an object of love in their hearts. All the laws he made were for promoting the intereſt and happineſs of his ſubjects, and he left a nation of barbarians ſo far civilized, as to live together in ſociety like rational creatures.

Hiſtory has held forth to us the brilliant characters of Alexander and Cæſar, but what were they in compariſon of Numa Pompilius. They deſtroyed kingdoms; he formed one. Wherever they came they ſpread deſolation; but this great man

man made laws to preſerve his people. In a word, his character was the moſt illuſtrious that can be imagined, and ought to be imitated by every ſovereign that deſires to promote the happineſs of his people, and acquire immortal fame.

LETTER VI.

IT very ſeldom happens that a good king is ſucceeded in the government of a nation by one of a ſimilar character. A wiſe legiſlator is often ſucceeded by one who hath nothing in view but that of ſpreading devaſtation through the countries that environ his dominions. Inſtead of cultivating the arts of peace, he aſpires to the name of a conqueror; and, in conſequence thereof, lays whole nations waſte, in order to gratify an ambitious paſſion. Indeed, there may be ſome exceptions to general propoſitions, but what is general, muſt certainly prove true. The fate of whole bodies of people is generally ſubmitted to the caprice of a ſingle man, and their happineſs or miſery depends upon the will of a tyrant.

Numa Pompilius having paid the debt of nature, the Romans were obliged to look out for a new ſovereign, becauſe in thoſe early ages the notion of hereditary right had not taken place. Men were conſidered as free, and they reſolved to avail themſelves of a privilege beſtowed upon them by nature. After ſome debate between the contending parties, both among the Romans and Sabines, the election of a king was propoſed, and Tullus Hoſtilius was made choice of to enjoy the regal dignity. This election was carried on in ſo regu-

lar a manner, that both bodies of people acquieſced in it, and it ſeemed entirely conſiſtent with every part of the conſtitution. For what monarch, where the power is lodged in the people, would choſe to aſcend the throne of ſovereignty, unleſs he was approved of by them; leſt he incur the diſpleaſure of a party, and ſo foment diviſions in the ſtate.

Tullus Hoſtilius was deſcended from one of the moſt eminent families in Rome, but his ambition was boundleſs, and he had an inclination to war, not ſo much to acquire riches, as to make himſelf glorious. So weak is the human mind, unleſs directed by ſolid reaſon and good ſenſe.

He had not been long ſeated on the throne of ſovereignty, when an opportunity offered, by which he had a fair pretence to indulge his favourite paſſions: for ſome of the Roman ſhepherds having committed a few depredations on the property of the Albans, a ſkirmiſh enſued, in which the Romans, who it ſeems had been defeated, fled, and made heavy complaints of the uſage they had received, at the ſame time taking care to conceal their own guilt.

Tullus Hoſtilius was glad of ſuch a favourable opportunity, and altho' to ſave appearances, ambaſſadors were ſent under pretence of accommodating matters, yet nothing was done; nor would either party acknowledge themſelves the aggreſſors. After many altercations, and nothing concluded upon, war was declared, and both raiſed forces in order to take the field as ſoon as the ſeaſon would permit. Nothing could be more agreeable to Tullus Hoſtilius, who looked upon war as the only buſineſs a king ſhould be engaged in, and who was ſo unlike his predeceſſor, Numa Pompilius, that he ſeemed to mind nothing but conqueſt, and

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overturn that form of government, which had been ſo long in eſtabliſhing, and ſo well planned, that the good of the whole community was in a manner inſeparably connected with it.

Both armies came in ſight of each other, about ſix miles from Rome, and each ſeemed impatient to engage, becauſe the battle, as was common in thoſe early ages, was to be deciſive. While they both ſtood looking at each other, the general of the Albans approached to the firſt line of the Romans, and propoſed, that inſtead of deſtroying ſo many men, a champion from each army ſhould be made choice of to decide the conteſt by ſingle combat. Tullus Hoſtilius, the Roman king, would have been glad to have undertaken the affair, but as glory was the ſtimulating motive to action, many of his ſubordinate leaders oppoſed him, and inſiſted that they would enter the liſts as combatants. While they were deliberating on the moſt proper methods to be uſed, a Roman, and one of the Albans, ſtepped forth, and told the chiefs, that there were in each army three men of the ſame age, and that the three Romans were born of one woman on one day, and the three Albans by one woman on the ſame day. They were remarkable for all thoſe virtues that are the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of men who ſeek for military glory, and their courage had been tried in ſeveral engagements. The three Romans were called Horatii, and the Albans, Curatii, and to them was committed the important affair of deciding the diſpute between two contending nations, who had nothing further in view than liberty and glory, who looked upon death with honour as ſuperior to life with an imputation of cowardice reſting upon them.

Both parties having agreed to the propoſal, the three brothers on each ſide were obliged to take the oaths according to the cuſtoms of the country, and then they were led forth amidſt the acclamations of the army on either ſide; for each waited with impatience for the deciſion of ſo important an event.

The three Roman youths exerted themſelves to the utmoſt, but two of them were killed, and victory ſeemed to declare in favour of the Albans; but nothing is more critical than the deciſion of a battle. The ſurviving Roman exerted himſelf with ſo much courage, that two of his antagoniſts were laid dead at his feet, and the ſurviving one, who was wounded, he took priſoner, and brought him to the Roman king.

A victory obtained in ſo eaſy a manner, raiſed the ſpirits of the Romans, and the Albans became their tributaries. The young Horatii was looked upon as the deliverer of his country, but while he was receiving the adulation of the people, he committed a crime that muſt for ever remain a diſgrace to humanity. Upon his return home, while crowned with the applauſe of the people, he ſaw his ſiſter among the crowd, bathed in tears. Upon enquiry, he found that ſhe was lamenting the loſs of her lover, one of the Curatii, who had been killed in the engagement. She had along with her a veſt which ſhe had made for her lover, and no ſooner did he ſee it, than he ſtabbed her dead on the ſpot, without regard to humanity, decency, or any of thoſe virtues that ſhould at all times mark the character of a hero.

An action committed in ſo barbarous a manner againſt all the ties of nature, or moral obligations, gave great offence to the ſenate, as well as the

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moſt deſerving people among the Romans. But the merit of the encounter over-balanced their reſentment, and the memory of what he had done to ſave them from a ſtate of ſlavery, buried his crime in oblivion. So true is the obſervation of the moraliſt: "Great actions, where they "promote ſelf-intereſt or that of the community, "will obſcure great crimes, let them be of ever "ſo enormous a nature."

Tullus Hoſtilius now reſolved to take a proper advantage of the victory he had obtained over the Albans, by making them for ever ſubject to the Romans. But beſides them, he had ſome of the neighbouring nations to contend with. The Fidena and Veii, had both reſolved to ſhake off the yoke of obedience that had been impoſed on them by Romulus, and they raiſed an army, in order to take the field. Tullus Hoſtilius finding that he would have occaſion to oppoſe powerful invaders, and repel force by force, went out to meet them, and having put them to flight, he ordered the general of the Veii, whom he had taken priſoner, to be conducted to Rome, where he was torn in pieces by wild horſes, a cuſtom common in thoſe moſt barbarous times, when people had but little regard for the laws of ſociety.

Having committed this act of horrid barbarity, he, in order to make his conqueſts complete, burnt down the city of Alba, and incorporated the inhabitants with the Romans. The chiefs were in their turn admitted to ſeats in the ſenate, ſo that in a ſhort time all the neighbouring ſtates became united under one government.

Some of the Sabines had revolted, but he raiſed an army of horſe, which they were not able to withſtand, and ſo gained a complete victory. From

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that time Tullus Hoſtilius had peace in his dominions till near the end of his reign; when he entered into a war with the Latines, but no engagement of a deciſive nature happened.

From ſome circumſtances that may be gathered from the Roman Hiſtory, as written by Livy, this prince ſeems to have been extremely credulous. Indeed, like many other tyrants, there is ſome ground to form a conjecture that his conſcience accuſed him on account of his many cruelties. He had made war upon the moſt frivolous pretences, and he had at different times trampled on the rights and privileges of a free people. The thoughts of theſe crimes operated ſo ſtrongly on his mind, that every thing became terrible to him. Thoſe who have declared war againſt all their fellow creatures, have reaſon to expect an enemy every where. Every prodigy in nature, which he could not comprehend, ſeemed to point out his approaching fate; for his greateſt enemy was his own conſcience. A dreadful famine happened in the Roman territories during the laſt year of his reign, and the people who hated him looking upon it as the juſt judgment of the gods for his many crimes, took up arms againſt him, and not only put him to death, but likewiſe maſſacred all his family. Indeed it was given out that he was killed by lightning, but that was only done with a view to ſcreen the conſpirators from puniſhment.

Thus you ſee, my dear Frederick, the difference in character between thoſe who are in their turns to preſide over mankind, and how eaſy it is for the beſt of men to become, in conſequence of lawleſs power, ſlaves to the meaneſt of all wretches.

Romulus was only the captain of a band of robbers,

robbers, and yet for all that he ſeems not to have been deſtitute of natural abilities. He made ſeveral good regulations for the government of his people, and although at laſt he became intoxicated with the love of power, yet the people ſtill revered the memory of his name. His ſucceſſor, Numa Pompilius, was an ornament to human nature. He completed what Romulus had begun, and left a people already powerful, both wiſe and happy.

Tullus Hoſtilius acted on principles diametrically oppoſite to the two princes already mentioned. He conſidered glory as inſeparably connected with war, and that no man had a right to be called great who had not, in conſequence of his ambition, laid whole provinces waſte. He injured his people, by impoſing upon them illegal taxes; but in the end he was brought to condign puniſhment, by thoſe people whom he had ſo illegally oppreſſed.

From this incident you ought to learn, that the people are the fountain of all power, and that no ſovereign has a right to domineer over them in an imperious manner. From the people the prince receives his power, and to them he ought to look upon himſelf accountable for his conduct in the exerciſe of it. All human beings are links of the ſame chain; they are all leſs or more connected together, as children of the ſame common parent; and therefore no perſon who has been advanced to the dignity of a ſovereign, ought ever to conſider himſelf in any other light than as once inveſted with a delegated authority, for which he is to be accountable to his conſtituents for diſcharging it in the moſt faithful manner.

LETTER VII.

THERE is nothing in the world can be attended with ſuch fatal conſequences to a nation as an interregnum. It is much more detrimental to the community than a civil war; for ſome reaſon can be aſſigned perhaps for the latter, but the former is of ſuch a nature, that it ſpreads diſſentions among the neareſt and deareſt relations. I am of opinion that nothing could give a ſanction to hereditary ſucceſſion, but that moſt rational of all principles; namely, the embracing of a leſſer evil, in order to avoid a greater. It could never have entered into the hearts of men, to give liberty to a ſovereign to transfer the right of government to his child, had it not been to preſerve the whole kingdom from the numerous evils that attend a popular election. Antient and modern hiſtory are both full of the many miſchiefs that have ariſen among different bodies of people, while they were engaged in the election of a new ſovereign. The Romans, at the death of Tullus Hoſtilius, were little better than barbarians; but then they were not inſenſible of their natural rights as men. They loved kingly government, but they did not chuſe to truſt the ſovereign with an unlimited power.

Many diſputes aroſe between the people of Rome and the Sabines, concerning the perſon whom they were to make choice of for their king, but at laſt the election fell on Ancus Martius, the grandſon of Numa Pompilius, who had been for ſo many years the father of his country. This circumſtance alone endeared him to the people,

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ſo great was the impreſſion that his grandfather's virtues had made upon their minds.

He had nothing in him of thoſe qualities uſually aſcribed to heroes, but he was a perfect maſter of the arts of peace. Like his grandfather, he conſidered the force that religion has upon the timorous mind, and therefore he added many new ceremonies to thoſe already eſtabliſhed. He taught his ſubjects to attend with the greateſt aſſiduity to agriculture, as the only means of making them happy, eſpecially in times of peace; and although ſuch injunctions were altogether uſeful and likely to be attended with the moſt beneficial conſequences, yet he was looked upon by the neighbouring ſtates as a poor mean-ſpirited coward. They ſaid, that he was not properly qualified to govern a warlike people, and therefore the Latins often made excurſions into his territories, and plundered his ſubjects of their moſt valuable effects.

By theſe means he was forced into a war, notwithſtanding his pacific diſpoſition, but he ſtill proceeded upon the principles of natural equity.

The outrages committed by the Latins, had been of a very enormous nature, but for all that, inſtead of making immediate repriſals, he ſent an herald to declare war in form. His ſucceſs was equal to the juſtice of his cauſe; for as he had been forced to take up arms in defence of his people, ſo before he ſheathed the ſword, he brought his enemies into ſubjection. There is nothing, my dear Frederick, comparable to truth, or the being engaged in a good cauſe. Our laſt attempt to procure ſucceſs may become abortive, but the hero who takes up arms from no motives of revenge, but merely to ſupport the dignity, and promote

promote the intereſt of his fellow-citizens, will be crowned with laurels of glory to the lateſt period of time. All the neighbouring nations near Rome, became tributary to the victorious conqueror, and the prince who was averſe to declare war till forced to it from motives of abſolute neceſſity, ſaw himſelf enrolled among thoſe illuſtrious heroes who had laid nations waſte, but did not deſerve ſuch an amiable name as himſelf, notwithſtanding his having a deformed arm that made him an object of reproach among the vulgar, who ſeldom look any further than the outſides of objects.

Having thus triumphed over his enemies, he returned home victorious, and again applied himſelf to the cultivation of the arts of peace. He built temples in every part of his dominions, and that the laws might have an effectual force, he erected a priſon for the confinement of malefactors, till ſuch time as they ſhould be brought to juſtice by a legal trial. He gave all the encouragement he could to trade, and emoluments were conferred upon ſuch as choſe to ſettle in the colony. By theſe methods he not only endeared himſelf to the people, but alſo increaſed the riches of the city; for the trade on the Tiber being laid open, moſt of the people from the Italian ſtates reſorted to it, and mixing with the Romans, they became much more civilized than before. Some ſtrangers alſo came from Greece, and among the reſt Lucumon, a man of great abilities, who had traded to moſt parts of the then known world. Ancus Martius appointed him tutor and guardian to his two ſons, and in conformity with the manners of the age, he aſſumed the name of Lucius Tarquinius. The ſenate, out of compliment to the king, elected him one of their

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own body, and ſoon after Ancus Martius died, after having beautified the city of Rome in the moſt elegant manner.

Lucius Tarquinus Priſcus had nothing to recommend him but his merit; but merit was a powerful recommendation in Rome, where no other quality was conſidered as eſſential in conſtituting the character of one who aſpired at the higheſt offices in the ſtate. In his approach to the gates of Rome, in one of the carriages made uſe of in that age, an eagle happened to pull off his hat, and his wife Tanaquil, who pretended to be well ſkilled in the whole myſtery of augury, ſaid, that this was an omen that he would one day wear the crown. Nothing operates ſo ſtrongly upon ambitious minds as ſuperſtition, and as he knew that the ſovereignty was then elective, he reſolved to avail himſelf of a circumſtance that promiſed ſo much honour. His riches procured him reſpect, and his popularity made him the darling of the people. He was artful and intriguing, but the people over whom he intended to place himſelf, were ſimple and honeſt. They had not the leaſt thought that ever he would aſpire to any higher honour than what was freely conferred by the ſenate, and the voice of the people, for he took care to keep them ſo much in the dark, that they could not find out his real intentions; ſo artful are ſome men; ſo deſigning are the ambitious.

Whatever ſome may think of the refinement of the preſent age, and the height to which intrigues have been carried, yet the following incident will ſhew, that intrigues are not ſolely confined to civilized nations. Barbarians are in many inſtances as cunning as thoſe who have had the benefit of a liberal education; and in ſome inſtances

ſtances their ingenuity makes a more laſting impreſſion on the mind.

Tarquinius having procured a ſeat in the ſenate, left nothing undone to ſet aſide the right of ſucceſſion, according to the will of the late king, who had appointed him guardian to his children. His higheſt ambition was to be king of the Romans, and he left nothing undone by which he could acquire ſo deſirable an end. When the day of election approached, he ſent the children of the late king to one of his country ſeats, and in a very artful ſpeech told the ſenate, that he had ſpent conſiderable ſums of money among them, with no other view than that of promoting the good of the commonwealth. He offered to diſcharge the regal dignity conſiſtent with the laws, and therefore he was elected by a conſiderable majority both of the ſenate and the people.

Tarquinius was fond of popularity, a virtue ſeldom found in a prince who obtains the regal dignity by intrigue; but the ſame good ſenſe that had brought him to the throne, enabled him ſit upon it. That he might not appear too arbitrary, he ordered that the number of ſenators ſhould be encreaſed to three hundred, which gave them a balance of power equal to that of the ſovereign, which in all well-regulated ſtates muſt preſerve liberty inviolate. In his reign the number of veſtal virgins was increaſed, and amphitheatres were erected for gladiators to combat with wild beaſts, which in ſubſequent ages produced many horrid ſcenes of cruelty.

You will undoubtedly think it ſtrange that any prince endow'd with wiſdom ſhould eſtabliſh games that would keep up among his people a ſpirit of ferocity; but then you muſt conſider, that the reign-

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ing paſſion of that age was war. People looked upon themſelves as enemies to each other, and as ſuch, they thought no ſort of glory ſo great as that of deſtroying the property of their fellow-creatures.

But notwithſtanding all his endeavours to cultivate the arts of peace, yet he was often obliged to take the field. The Latins, as well as the Sabines, made continual inroads into his dominions; but he having ſet fire to one of the bridges which they had laid acroſs the Tiber, they could not make a retreat in a proper manner, ſo that many of them were drowned, and the reſt put to the ſword. Indeed, the victory he obtained over them was ſo complete, that the dead bodies floating down the river, conveyed the news to the citizens, before the king had an opportunity to ſend them the account of the particulars by a meſſenger. So fluctuating in general is the ſtate of human affairs, and ſo ſure are thoſe of conqueſt who do not ſeek it, but only take the field in conſequence of the obligations they are under to defend the privileges of their country. Tyrants may triumph by the aſcendency which power gives them; tributary ſtates may violate the moſt ſolemn engagements; but thoſe princes who are the real fathers of their country, need never be afraid of all the machinations of their enemies.

LETTER VIII.

TARQUINIUS having ſubdued his enemies, and taken their moſt conſiderable forts, reſolved that his people ſhould not ſpend their time in idleneſs. He knew that indolence, or a neglect of exerciſing the body, tended towards enfeebling the

the mind; and as he was in continual apprehenſions from ſome of the vanquiſhed nations diſturbing him in the peaceable poſſeſſion of his regal authority, he reſolved to find out employment for ſuch of the youth as were moſt robuſt and active. He thought that the only way to procure reſpect, would be to make his city as grand as poſſible, according to the architecture uſed in thoſe early ages, when nothing but utility was ſought after, and luxury was conſidered as a crime.

You muſt acknowledge, that this was a reſolution worthy of a great prince, for no man was ever ſent into the world to be idle; he may always find ſomething to do, and therefore, ſuch of his ſubjects as were not immediately employed in agriculture, he appointed to repair and enlarge the walls of the city. A market was made, where the peaſants were to diſpoſe of their goods, and public aqueducts were conſtructed, by which water was conveyed to the city; ſo that Rome aſſumed a ſtill grander and more majeſtic form than it had hitherto done. He ſtudied the manners of the people, and as he knew they were fond of public diverſions, he ordered a new amphitheatre to be erected, which acquired him ſo much popularity, that the citizens for ſome time looked upon him as a prince who had nothing but their intereſt in view.

Like the moſt accompliſhed politicians in all ages and nations, he conſidered how powerfully ſuperſtition operates on the minds of the vulgar, and therefore he gave all the encouragement he could to the augurs: a ſet of worthleſs wretches who pretended to foretell future events. They had long lived in the moſt obſcure retirements, and as they pretended to an intercourſe with the gods, the people looked upon them as divinely inſpired, and

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that notion Tarquinius reſolved to turn to his own advantage. Senſible of the vaſt uſe that cavalry, or armed horſemen were of, in that part of Italy, by making incurſions in the neighbouring nations that ſurrounded his territories, he reſolved to augment the number of his knights, but an augur came to him, and told him that it was contrary to the order of Romulus, who was now deified, and therefore charged him not to make any innovations in his army.

The king was too wiſe to be duped by the arts of an impoſtor, and, therefore, looking at the augur with the moſt ineffable contempt, aſked him what he had got in his hand; to which the other anſwered, "a whetſtone." "Why then, (ſaid the king) "I will cut it in two with this razor." The augur told him he might cut it, for the gods had given him permiſſion; and accordingly he did: which incident eſtabliſhed the power of the augurs on a more ſolid foundation than what it had reſted on before. From that time, like all other impoſtors, they reigned ſole lords of the conſciences of the people, and nothing was undertaken without their conſent and approbation; ſo artful are ſome men in laying their ſchemes, and ſo weak are others in being impoſed upon by them.

There is a certain weakneſs in the human mind, in being fond of dreſs, or any thing that may, from its exterior appearance, create reſpect; but even that weakneſs may, on ſeveral occaſions, become a ſhining virtue in a ſovereign. Although a king is no more by nature than another man, yet ſuch are the notions that men form in general, that a few inſignias of regal dignity, ſuch as a throne, a crown, and a ſceptre, impreſſes a reverential awe upon the minds of the vulgar, and makes them

obedient to laws, which otherwiſe they would treat with the moſt ſovereign contempt.

Some of the neighbouring kings had made themſelves crowns, in order that they might be known from the reſt of the people and Tarquinius reſolved to imitate their example. He ordered that a ſuit of purple robes ſhould be made for him, in which he was to appear in public; a golden crown was to grace his head, and whenever he received foreign ambaſſadors, he was to be ſeated on an ivory throne, holding a ſceptre in his hand, with the figure of an eagle on the top. Theſe things, however trifling they may appear in the eyes of ſome men, yet were attended with ſome very important conſequences, as every thing will be, that attracts the notice of the vulgar, or creates envy in the minds of thoſe who look upon themſelves as equal to the prince. The ſons of the late king were ſtill alive, and their indignations were fired when they ſaw a perſon whom they looked upon as an impoſtor, cloathed with the enſigns of regal authority. They therefore ſent ſome ruffians, who went to the palace, and who, in conſequence of the inſtructions they received, cleaved the king through the head with an axe.

The murderers were apprehended before they got out of the palace, and, being dragged to the forum by the lictors, were all put to death; but the ſons of the late king had the good fortune to make their eſcape, otherwiſe they would have ſuffered in the ſame manner.

Such was the end of a prince, who had done many things towards civilizing the Roman people, by introducing among them the moſt uſeful of the Greek arts. He aſcended the throne when he was young, and his daughter having married Servius Tullius, he

he reſolved to make him his ſucceſſor in the government. His death ought to be a leſſon to all ſovereigns, in what manner they acquire the title of kings. He had been left the guardian of the ſons of the king who reigned before him, and that honour was conferred upon him in conſequence of the belief that an indulgent parent had of his fidelity. However, contrary to the laws of gratitude and hoſpitality, he ſet himſelf up in an artful manner againſt thoſe who had a prior title, and, to acquire reſpect, cloathed himſelf with ſuch marks of royalty as the Romans had never before ſeen. The conſequence of theſe actions brought on his deſtruction, and although he was a popular prince, yet even popularity could not ſave him from the ſword of an aſſaſſin. No king can be ſafe, who does not, by his virtues, reign in the hearts of his ſubjects as an object of love. The love of their ſubjects is the ſtrongeſt guard that princes can have; for while they are conſidered as worthy of veneration, by thoſe who are under their authority, they need not be afraid of the ſword of the aſſaſſin, nor the contrivances of the factious, who ſeek to foment rebellion.

As Tarquinius was the favourite of the people, ſo, in conſequence of the report of his death, the whole city was in an uproar; but Tanquil, in order to get her ſon-in-law elected king, told the mob that ſurrounded the palace, that the report concerning her huſband's death was falſe, for he was only ſtunned with a blow that he had received from one of the conſpirators. However, that ſhe might accompliſh her favourite purpoſe, and that nothing might be wanting to preſerve the peace of the city, Servius Tullius came out of the palace, attended by the lictors, pretending that he did ſo by order of the

king, who had deſired him to put on the enſigns of royalty. This was done in conſequence of a preconcerted ſcheme between him and his mother-in-law, and no ſooner had he gained over moſt of the principal citizens to his intereſt, than he propoſed himſelf a candidate in the ſenate, and was elected without the conſent of the people. This was a practice hitherto unknown in Rome, and it ſerves to ſhew, that art and cunning are often more effectual in bringing about a revolution than the ſtrongeſt armed force.

This Servius Tullius was one of thoſe, who conſider the people only in a ſecondary light, when compared with their repreſentatives, who are conſtituted by them to make and preſerve laws. He loved popularity, but he conſidered the voice of the ſenate as much more ſuperior. His mother had been a poor common ſlave, and his father a huſbandman in one of the ſtates adjoining to Rome. While only an infant, he had been taken priſoner by ſome of Tarquinius's forces, and being brought to Tanaquil, the queen, he was nurſed by her as her own. One day, as he was laying in his cradle, her ſuperſtition prompted her to imagine that ſhe ſaw a flame ſurrounding his head, and therefore ſhe prognoſticated that he would one day be a great man. That induced her to bring him up with the greateſt tenderneſs, and having given him ſuch education as could be procured in that age, ſhe at laſt beſtowed her daughter upon him in marriage.

When the king grew old, he became ſuch a favourite with the people, that, by their unanimous conſent the government was in a manner committed to him; ſo that, although his father-in-law had the name of ſovereign, yet HE was ſo in reality, ſome years before the aſſaſſination took place.

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He had high notions of the regal authority, and, in order to make himſelf the more abſolute, he endeavoured, as much as poſſibly he could, to ingratiate himſelf with the ſenate. This ſhewed him to be a profound politician; for ſurely nothing can contribute more towards aggrandizing the power of the ſovereign, than that of corrupting the repreſentatives of the people, and making them a ſtanding council to a corrupt adminiſtration. An undertaking of ſo important a nature, and likely to be attended with very ſtriking conſequences, could not be brought about, without a vaſt number of difficulties. Art, however, ſupplied the place of power, and, as is common in moſt caſes of the like nature, he was obliged to have recourſe to ſuch ſtratagems as ſeemed moſt likely to accompliſh the end, and enable him to trample on the liberties of a free people.

The equity and ſimplicity of the firſt form of government in Rome was ſuch, that the expences neceſſary for paying the army, and ſupporting the regal authority, were raiſed by an equal tax on the people, every one contributing the ſame ſum, without any regard to the difference in rank or fortune.

Servius Tullius, in order to make himſelf more popular than he had hitherto been, pretended that the tax was inconſiſtent with natural equity, and therefore propoſed, that every ſubject ſhould pay his ſhare towards ſupporting the government according to his ſtation. This was a bait eaſily and greedily ſwallowed by the vulgar, whoſe abilities were too contracted to enable them to penetrate into the depth of his ſcheme, which was that of for ever depriving them of their privileges. With one voice they gave him leave to ſettle the taxes in whatever

manner he thought proper. Upon which, he employed perſons to take down the names of all the citizens, with an account of what fortunes they enjoyed, that he might oblige every one to pay according to the value of his eſtate. The liſts being made out and returned to the king, he divided the whole body of the people into ſix claſſes, the firſt of which was to compoſe the ſenate, and theſe were ſuch as had deſcended from the original inhabitants of the city, called Patricians. The oldeſt of this claſs was to remain at home in time of war, to defend the city, and the younger ones were to take the field with the king, in order to acquire a perfect knowledge of military diſcipline.

The ſecond claſs were diſtinguiſhed from the firſt by their armour, but in moſt other things there was but a very ſmall difference. The arms of the firſt claſs was, a helmet, a javelin, a ſword and a ſpear; but the ſecond were obliged to wear a target. The third claſs were ſtill a degree lower, but it does not rightly appear what were the diſtinguiſhing parts of their armour from the other two. The fourth claſs, like the ſecond and third, were obliged to learn the military art, which was no difficult matter in thoſe early days, when men preferred war to peace, and rapine and plunder to all the delights that flow from enjoying the ſweets of ſociety. The fifth claſs conſiſted of ſuch irregulars as were obliged to attend the army; and the ſixth claſs was to remain at home, and inſtruct the young ones in the art of war.

Having thus, like a ſkilful politician, divided the people into regular bodies, each body was taxed according to his grandeur or ſeniority; and as the loweſt were the moſt numerous, there is no wonder that the king gained the greateſt popular applauſe;

for

for the vulgar ſeldom penetrate deep enough to diſcover the arts of princes. By theſe means the people, eſpecially the lower claſs, were deprived of that power originally inherent in them; for the higher claſſes, who paid the largeſt ſums towards ſupporting the government, inſiſted upon the privilege of voting alone; ſo that popular elections were at an end.

LETTER IX.

THERE is a certain ſtrength of genius in ſome legiſlators, that bears down with force even the ſtrongeſt oppoſition, and, by an exertion of the powers of the human mind, ſtrikes at the root of vulgar prejudices, notwithſtanding their having been long ſanctified by cuſtom, and held up to the adoration of the public, as things in their own nature not to be called in queſtion.

Servius Tullius was ſenſible of the weakneſs of the human mind, and therefore, in order to prevent conſpiracies againſt his government, on account of new regulations, he procured an order from the ſenate, by which all the men were to aſſemble in the field, called Campus Martius, once in five years, armed in ſuch a manner, as if they had been going to take the field againſt the common enemy; and on ſuch occaſions, every maſter of a family was obliged to give an account of the number of people whom he had under him, and at the ſame time an inventory of his real and perſonal eſtate. Every maſter of a family was permitted to grant manumiſſion to his ſlaves, and ſuch as were thus made free, he ordered to be incorporated among the lower claſſes of the citizens.

Two of the grandſons of Tarquinius were ſtill alive, and, as Servius had ſettled peace and concord in his dominions, he gave them his two daughters in marriage, intending at the ſame time to reſign the regal authority, and ſpend the remainder of his days in retirement. But all his hopes were fruſtrated by the very means that he thought would accompliſh them.

One of his ſons-in-law was of a haughty domineering temper, and the other was gentle, affable, and condeſcending. His own daughters, whom he had beſtowed upon them in marriage, were ſimilar in the whole of their conduct, and therefore, in order to balance their tempers, he joined the mild and the ferocious together. Lucius, the ferocious ſon-in-law of Servius, could not bear with the mild temper of his wife, and having placed his affections on Tullia, the conſort of his brother, ſhe encouraged his addreſſes in ſuch a manner, that ſhe murdered her huſband, while Lucius committed the ſame crime on his wife. The guilty lovers were ſoon after married, but an union contracted in ſuch a manner, could not be ſuppoſed to laſt long; for thoſe who plunge themſelves into crimes in defiance of every moral obligation, are generally led on to the commiſſion of greater ones; nor do they know where to ſtop.

The murder of their reſpective conſorts was followed with a deſign to ſeize on the ſovereignty, and for that purpoſe Lucius raiſed ſeveral factions among the young nobility, by telling them that he was heir to the crown, in conſequence of his being deſcended from Tarquinius. The king was no ſtranger to his ſon-in-law's machinations, and therefore having ingratiated himſelf with the ſenate, he took ſuch meaſures as to ſecure his own ſafety, and

and brought Lucius to an acknowledgement of his guilt, and made him glad to implore pardon, which was granted by the king in the moſt generous manner.

This conduct of Lucius was, however, only feigned, in order to watch for a more favourable opportunity to effectuate his deſigns, and in theſe ſchemes he was much encouraged by his wife Tullia. The young ſenators he brought over to his intereſt by gifts and promiſes, while he gained the affections of the old ones, by putting them in mind of the many favours that his grandfather had heaped upon them. By theſe means his party continued to increaſe every day, till at laſt Lucius pulling off the maſk, went to the ſenate-houſe, adorned with all the enſigns of royalty worn by the king, and made a long ſpeech concerning the legality of his title, as grandſon of Tarquinius, and at the ſame time not neglecting to point out, that Servius, whom he called an uſurper, was one of obſcure birth, who had no right to govern ſo brave a people as the Romans.

When he had harangued to the ſenate for ſome time, Servius, who had received intimation of his deſign, came into the aſſembly, and aſcending the throne, attempted to puſh the haughty young man down the ſteps, but age and infirmities were obliged to give way to youthful vigor, and the younger ſenators, who had been previouſly inſtructed by Lucius, followed the king out of the ſenate-houſe, and diſpatched him in the ſtreet.

Such was the end of Servius Tullius, a prince of great abilities, who was properly qualified for governing a rude people. He was not ſo much intent on enlarging the bounds of his kingdom, as in ſecuring what conqueſts had already been made.

He knew that the members might become too large for the head, and therefore he wiſely reſolved not to add any thing of importance to the kingdom over which he reigned, except that of making laws for the good government of his ſubjects. He ſeems to have ſtudied human nature, and to have made himſelf a perfect maſter of all the ſprings of action in the heart, from which virtues and vices flow. If he encroached a little upon the freedom of popular election, it ſeems to have been done with a view of preventing very great miſchiefs, and upon the whole, his conduct, however artful, ought to be imitated by every ſovereign who has the intereſt of his people at heart.

The ſame violence of temper that induced Lucius Tarquinius to murder his father-in-law, ſeemed to give a tincture to all his actions, after he was cloathed with the regal dignity. He treated the ſenate with the utmoſt contempt, as if he had a right to govern without aſking their advice, being vain enough to ſuppoſe, that he was the grandſon of Tarquinius, ſo his title was hereditary. He would not ſuffer the body of his father-in-law to be buried, according to the cuſtom of Rome, but ordered ſome of his ſlaves to treat it with the utmoſt indignity, in all which he was encouraged by his wife, who commanded her charioteer to drive the chariot over it, while it lay expoſed in the ſtreets. All ſuch as had been the confidents of his father-in-law, he ordered to be put to death, and as he knew that his conduct made him an object of deteſtation among the ſober part of the citizens, he hired a guard to attend his perſon, leſt any one ſhould ruſh into his palace and murder him. Guilt creates fear, and it ought to be a leſſon to princes in general, never to place ſo much confidence in the fidelity

fidelity of hired guards, as in the hearts and affections of their ſubjects. The ſubjects who love their prince will never injure his perſon, and to create love, they ſeek no more than a diſcharge of his duty.

The firſt exploit he engaged in was a war againſt ſome of the Sabines, who had revolted againſt his government, and by doing ſo, he thought to divert the attention of ſuch as did not approve of his conduct, from entering into conſpiracies. From this incident we may learn, that, notwithſtanding all his vices, yet he was a man of good abilities, ſo far as abilities are exerted in procuring an illegal authority, and ſupporting it by cruelty.

Having ſubdued ſuch of the Sabines as had taken arms againſt his government, he next turned his forces againſt the Volſci, from whom he took ſome conſiderable towns, but did not bring them wholly into a ſtate of ſubjection. It had been a rule laid down by the Romans, when they firſt formed themſelves into a ſociety, never to make uſe of any ſtratagem when they atacked a town; but here Tarquin found himſelf under the neceſſity of deviating from it. He made uſe of all the arts he was capable of, in order to take the city of Gabii; but all theſe proving ineffectual, his ſon Sextus pretended to deſert from his army, and took refuge among the inhabitants, who not only treated him with the greateſt hoſpitality, but alſo made him commander in chief of their army.

Having thus ingratiated himſelf with the people, while his father was engaged in carrying on the ſiege, he reſolved not to loſe any time in bringing about an accompliſhment of that ſcheme, for which he had been ſent into the place.

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He ſent, in the moſt artful manner, a ſervant in whom he could confide, with a meſſage of his ſucceſſes, and the king, taking the meſſenger into a garden, gave him no other account but that of making him witneſs to his cutting off the heads of the talleſt poppies. This was done in conſequence of a ſignal having been agreed upon by the father and the ſon, and no ſooner had the meſſenger declared his anſwer to Sextus, than the artful youth ſtirred up ſo many diſſenſions among the citizens, that the heads of the principal parties were cut off, and then the whole government centered in himſelf. By theſe means, Tarquin was enabled to take the town, after a ſham reſiſtance made by his ſon, who did every thing he could to diſcourage the troops under his command, becauſe he had no intention that they ſhould fight. He had, by falſe pretences, inſinuated himſelf among them, and by the ſame falſe pretences he made his father their ſovereign.

Having thus ſubdued his enemies abroad, and being ſtill fearful leſt his ſubjects ſhould rebel, he ordered ſuch of the ſoldiers as were diſbanded, to aſſiſt in finiſhing the capitol, which had been founded ſome time before, and by theſe means he ſtill continued to divert their attention from all ſorts of conſpiracies that might affect the peace of the government. While the building of the capitol was carrying on, a woman came to Tarquin, and offered to ſell him nine books, which ſhe herſelf had compoſed, but he refuſed to buy them, becauſe he looked upon the price as rather too exorbitant.

The woman took no notice of his refuſal, but retiring to a diſtant part of the city, returned with only ſix of the books, and telling Tarquin that ſhe had burnt the other three, demanded as much money for the ſix as the nine. Again ſhe retired, and burnt

burnt three more, and upon her return to Tarquin, demanded the ſame money for the remaining three, which ſo ſurpriſed Tarquin, that he went and conſulted the augurs. The augurs told him, that he ought to have bought the books, and begged that he would buy the remaining, if ever ſhe ſhould come to offer them again. Accordingly, he bought them for the ſame ſum propoſed at firſt, and received inſtructions to take proper care of them, as containing things of the utmoſt importance.

LETTER X.

THIS woman, it ſeems, was one of the Sybils, and therefore Lucius Tarquin, in order to make a public diſplay of his piety to the meſſengers of the gods, and to ingratiate himſelf the more with the people, ordered two perſons to take care of the ſacred reliques, and the number was in ſubſequent ages encreaſed to fifteen. This was a wiſe ſtroke of human policy, for as the people were then ſunk into the darkeſt ſuperſtition, every omen or prodigy was looked upon as ſacred. Such, my dear Frederick, will always happen when men neglect to cultivate the powers of the human underſtanding, ſo as to be able to diſtinguiſh between truth and falſhood.

Tarquin having appointed perſons to keep the Sybiline oracles, ordered at the ſame time that a houſe ſhould be built for their reception, and while the workmen were digging for the foundation of the walls, they found the head of one Tolus, who had been dead many years before, and it bled as if it had not laid there above a day. Superſtition wrought this circumſtance up to the higheſt pitch, and in memory of ſo ſingular an event, it was agreed

agreed upon both by the king and the ſenate, that the building ſhould be called Caput Toli; from whence this noted ſtructure, in latter ages, continued to be called the Capitol: and thus you may learn from what trifling incidents great things take their names.

The Capitol was a large ſquare building, dedicated to Jupiter, or the ſupreme deity; but as the Romans believed in the doctrine of Polytheiſm, or a plurality of gods, ſo they ordered that two of the intermediate ſpaces within the temple ſhould be conſecrated to the ſervice of Minerva and Juno. The building of this famous ſtructure took up no leſs than four years, and as the people were burdened with very oppreſſive taxes to carry it on, ſo they began to murmur, and wiſhed for an opportunity of throwing off a yoke which they looked upon as altogether tyrannical.

Tarquin was ſenſible that a barbarous people could not long be confined to the arts of peace, and therefore, in order to gratifytheir favourite wiſh, he declared war againſt the Rutuli, who had given him ſome offence, and laid ſiege to Ardea, the capital city of their territories, more with a view of humouring the people than to procure any valuable acquiſitions, or even the moſt pecuniary emoluments. Thus tyrants will, on many occaſions, make their ſubjects inſtruments in their own hands, to execute their illegal purpoſes, and by deſtroying many of the moſt uſeful members of ſociety, eſtabliſh a deſpotic government, contrary to the natural rights of mankind, who are all born free, and equally entitled to the ſame privileges.

The ſiege of Ardea took up ſome time, and Tarquin was obliged to turn it into a blockade, by bringing his forces to the different avenues, in order

order to prevent any ſupplies or proviſions from being brought to the people. The general and officers of the army had tents appointed for their reſidence; and one evening an incident happened of ſo important a nature, that it put an end to the kingly government of Rome, and brought about the eſtabliſhment of the commonwealth.

Sextus, the king's ſon, with one Collatinus, a young Roman, and ſome other noble youths, having made rather too free with the bottle, began to harangue on the virtue of their wives, each repreſenting his own as endowed with the moſt ſuperior qualities.

Youth are ſeldom guided by prudence, and the young men being too much heated with liquor to hearken to the voice of reaſon, Collatinus ſtood up and propoſed that they ſhould all ſet out for Rome, and he whoſe wife was found beſt employed, ſhould be looked upon as the moſt virtuous. The propoſal was immediately reliſhed, and although it was then very late, yet the young warriors mounted their horſes, and ſet out for Rome, where they found all the ladies ſpending their time in luxury, except Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, who was ſitting at work with her maids.

Lucretia received her huſband in the moſt endearing manner, and at the ſame time treated his friends with that reſpect due to their rank; and ſuch was her modeſty, beauty, and the dignity of her behaviour, that they all agreed to give her the preference.

But nothing can protect the moſt virtuous or the moſt beautiful againſt lawleſs power, and ungovernable luſt. Sextus was a laſcivious young man, and no ſooner had he ſeen the modeſt deportment of Lucretia, than his whole ſoul was fired with the

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deſire of enjoyment; although he knew it would be difficult to gratify his paſſion, and in the end might be attended with the moſt dangerous conſequnces.

Thus you find a prince, the ſon of a king, whoſe duty it was to have protected innocence, contriving ſchemes to violate the moſt ſacred ties of moral obligation. To debauch the wife of his friend, or, if that did not ſucceed, to raviſh her.

The image of Lucretia took place in his mind in preference to every other object, and he reſolved to enjoy her, although he ſhould loſe his life for ſuch a flagrant breach of duty. He knew, that as ſhe was innocent herſelf, ſo ſhe had no ſuſpicion of the guilt of others, and therefore he doubted not but he would be able to accompliſh his purpoſe.

A few days after this affair he left the camp and repaired to Rome, and under pretence of paying a viſit to Lucretia, he found her engaged in the ſame manner as before. She treated him with the greateſt hoſpitality on account of his rank, and after ſupper ordered a bed to be made for him that he might repoſe himſelf after the fatigues of his journey. She then retired to reſt herſelf, not ſuſpecting any villainy; but Sextus was too much intent upon his ſcheme to think of receding. About midnight he went to her apartment, where he found her faſt aſleep, and having awaked her, held a drawn ſword to her breaſt, telling her at the ſame time, that if ſhe did not comply with his deſires, he would kill her on the ſpot.

All theſe menaces, however, could not have made her give up her virtue, nor ſatisfy the luſt of a brutal villain, till he made uſe of a ſtratagem which he thought would be effectual. He told her, that unleſs ſhe ſubmitted to his deſires, he would kill her, and then having killed his own ſlave, he would lay

lay them both in the ſame bed together, after which he would return to the army, and tell Collatinus that he had found his ſlave and Lucretia in bed together, for which he had killed them.

The fear of ſhame operated more thoroughly on her mind, than the fear of loſing her life, and ſhe could not endure the thought of having it mentioned after her death, that ſhe had been found in an act of criminal converſation with a ſlave. This induced her to comply with his brutal deſire, and next morning he returned to the camp, rejoicing to think that he had triumphed over the virtue of the moſt accompliſhed woman at that time in Rome.

Lucretia, however, could not bear the thoughts of her diſgrace; ſhe conſidered life as no longer uſeful, after it was ſtained by pollution; ſhe ſhut herſelf up in her chamber, and diſpatched a meſſenger to her huſband Collatinus, and Spurius her father, who came to her next day, bringing along with them ſeveral noble Romans, among whom was Brutus, a youth reputed as one of the moſt valiant officers in the army.

As ſoon as they came into her apartment they found her in all the agonies of deſpair, and not knowing the reaſon, ſaid every thing they could in order to compoſe her mind, and bring her back to her uſual ſtate of tranquillity; but all was in vain, for looking at Collatinus, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, but regaining her uſual ſolitude, ſhe ſpoke to him in words to the following purport: "My "dear Collatinus, the wretch Sextus, whom you "brought along with you to viſit me, has polluted "the wife of your boſom, and therefore I cannot "bear to live any longer. The fear of ſhame, "with which he threatened me, induced me to "comply with his unlawful deſires. I am now a

"poor

" poor miſerable wretch, but if you have the leaſt " regard for the love of hoſpitality, or can re- " member one who has been dear to you, let not " the injury done to Lucretia go unpuniſhed." Having uttered theſe words ſhe pulled a dagger from under her robe, where ſhe had concealed it, before they came into her apartment, and plunging it into her boſom, ſhe expired inſtantly.

The whole company were ſtruck with conſternation, and after ſome time ſpent in ſilence gazing upon each other, Brutus, with the moſt reſolute fortitude, pulled the dagger out of the wound, and holding it up to heaven, ſwore by the immortal gods that he would never reſt till he had driven the family of the Tarquins from Rome, and revenged the death of the virtuous Lucretia.

This Brutus was ſur-named Junius, was the ſon of a noble Roman, but for ſome time had been looked upon as no better than an ideot, although his courage had been tried and proved in ſeveral engagements. He appeared now in a quite different light, and was conſidered by Collatinus, and the other relations of Lucretia, as one worthy of the higheſt dignity in the commonwealth. He gave the bloody dagger to every one preſent, and made them ſwear that they would never lay down their arms till they had driven the whole family of Tarquinus out of Rome, and the whole was ſwallowed with the utmoſt avidity.

The father of Brutus had been put to death by order of Tarquin, and the ſon fearing leſt he ſhould ſhare the ſame fate, had all along feigned himſelf an ideot, the belief of which gaining ground, the tyrant looked upon him as altogether unworthy of his notice. This part of his conduct was a ſtrong proof of his ſuperior genius, for he knew

knew that nothing is more proper to overthrow tyranny, than to wait for a ſerviceable opportunity. He doubted not but one day he would meet with an opportunity, and in the ordinary courſe of things it took place.

LETTER XI.

BRUTUS, whoſe abilities now began to ſhine in a moſt conſpicuous manner, reſolved to embrace ſo favourable an opportunity of reſtoring the freedom of his fellow citizens, and driving from Rome a family who had been a diſgrace to human nature. By a proper and ſpirited repreſentation of the conduct of Tarquin, and the injury done to Lucretia by Sextus, his ſon, he engaged the populace in his favour, which was not very difficult as they were enraged againſt the uſurper, and longed for a new form of government. Accordingly they met together, and propoſed an act of baniſhment againſt the king and his family, and then having armed themſelves properly, they went in a body to the camp at Ardea, in order to perſuade the ſoldiers in the army to join the inſurrection.

So enraged were the people when they heard of what had been done to Lucretia, that they roſe in great numbers in order to beſet the palace, upon which Tullia made her eſcape under a load of curſes from the injured inhabitants, who looked upon her as the cauſe of all their miſery, and as one who had inſtigated her huſband to trample on their juſt rights and privileges. She had long forced the people to treat her with reſpect, to which they were induced by motives of fear inſtead of love, but now ſhe found a reverſe of fortune, and, like all tyrants, was obliged to give way

to

to the ſtream of popular indignation. Nor was it any better with Tarquin, the king, her huſband, for no ſooner had he received intelligence that a revolution was likely to take place, than he left the army in order to quell it before it ſhould get too ſtrong. Brutus, who had ſpies to watch all his motions, received news of his approach, but inſtead of meeting him turned out of the main road, and continued his journey through bye-ways to the camp.

Tarquin not having any ſuſpicion that things had been carried to ſuch an extremity, marched to Rome, but the citizens, filled with an honeſt indignation, ſhut the gates upon him. In that deſtreſſed condition, while he every moment expected to be deſtroyed by his offended ſubjects, he made his eſcape to a ſmall town called Civa, where he found an aſylum, though not the approbation of a good conſcience. His ſon Sextus, who now ſaw Brutus proclaimed deliverer of his country, finding it not ſafe to remain any longer in the army, went to the city of Gabii, which he looked upon as his own by conqueſt, but his conduct had been ſo odious to the people in general, that they roſe in a body againſt him, ſo that they brought him to condign puniſhment, for having fomented ſo many diviſions amongſt them, in order to aggrandize himſelf, by diſturbing the public peace.

This was a revolution of too important a nature to be paſſed over in ſilence, for, as I have already told you, unleſs proper remarks be made on hiſtory, we can never thoroughly underſtand it. Tarquin had been raiſed to the regal dignity in conſequence of his being the grandſon of one who had been in many inſtances the favourite of the people. He procured the diadem by fraud and murder,

murder, and, in order to enjoy it he was obliged to have recourſe to the moſt artful ſchemes. He looked upon his ſubjects as ſlaves, created for no other purpoſe but for him to trample under his feet, but he was in the end convinced that natural rights can never be forced. "Shut nature out "at the door, and ſhe will come in at the "window."

Tarquin might have lived happy had he conſidered his own intereſt as inſeparably connected with that of his people, but he imagined that he might be great, while they were miſerable. This is perhaps one of the moſt wretched notions that ever entered into the mind of a ſovereign. There is an original contraſt by nature between the governed and the governor, and each are in their reſpective ſtations, obliged to perform every thing incumbent upon them. Thus the prince is not to make laws without the conſent of his people, but when they do conſent to any new regulations propoſed by him, he is to ſee it enforced, conſiſtent with the nature of the power lodged in him by the conſtitution.

The expulſion of Tarquin and his family put an end to the regal government of Rome, after he had reigned twenty-five years, and committed ſuch a number of cruelties, that he became an object of deteſtation to the people. From the foundation of the city by Romulus, till this important event took place, was two hundred and forty-four years according to Livy; but we muſt not put too much confidence in antient chronology; becauſe in many inſtances it will not bear the teſt of a public or private enquiry. But to leave all ſuch points to be diſputed and ſettled by antiquarians, I muſt in this make ſome reflections on government, for you know

know that I divided the Roman hiſtory into three general parts, and we are now arrived at the end of one of them. It has been much diſputed in our public ſchools, whether it is prudent or conſiſtent with the laws of any country to intruſt the whole government into the hands of one man. Indeed, if, by government is meant the executive part only, then the ſovereign becomes no more than a ſervant of the ſtate, for his conduct is circumſcribed by a given rule beyond which he cannot go without forfeiting his title to the ſovereignty, by infringing the natural rights of his ſubjects.

But if by government is meant an inherent right in the prince to make laws in conſequence of his own will and pleaſure, binding on the people without their conſent, or the ſmalleſt part of their approbation, then it naturally follows, that they have tamely given up their rights, or he has by an exertion of illegal power trampled upon them. Whatever rights or privileges are or have been acquired by our predeceſſors, they are tranſmitted to us in order that we ſhould leave our children in poſſeſſion of them. If we do ſo we act as the moſt faithful guardians of the laws of our country, but if we act otherwiſe, and either ſell or give up upon any conſideration whatever of theſe glorious rights and privileges, we entail upon ourſelves everlaſting infamy, in conſequence of having left our children deprived of their birth-right by nature. The Romans, according to the foregoing account, had ſuffered ſome of their moſt valuable privileges to be wreſted from them by artful and deſigning men, and for ſome time they ſubmitted to illegal impoſitions, becauſe they were utterly unacquainted with their own importance as a body of free people;

ple; but a ſingle incident rouzed them from the lethargy, and made them aſſert their rights as men.

We have hitherto conſidered Rome in its infant ſtate, under the government of kings, whoſe power, in ſome caſes, was circumſcribed by the ſenate. But before we enter upon a new period of this hiſtory, it will be neceſſary to make a few obſervations on the different forms of government that have taken place in the world, becauſe this will enable us to form juſt notions of the extent of civil power, and know how far it is abſolute, and how far limited by proper reſtrictions. The moſt antient form of all government was the patriarchal, and nothing could be more natural, for ſurely every parent has a right to give laws to his children, where no ſociety has been formed, nor any municipal laws promulgated.

When mankind began to multiply upon the earth, and families increaſed in ſuch a manner as not to be in a proper manner ſubordinate to the head, or the father, then it was found neceſſary, that all thoſe who lived in a certain diſtrict ſhould join together, and either elect one or more to act conſiſtent with a rule of duty laid down by the community at large, ſo as to promote the intereſt of the whole collective body, and of every individual, as a member of the whole.

Some nations made choice of one man, in whoſe hands they lodged the executive power, and thereby conferred upon him the privilege of tranſmitting the right of government to his own poſterity. Others made choice of a ſingle man, who was to govern for life, but when he died, they were to be entitled to the privilege of a new election, without paying any greater regard to the children of the late king, than

than as they ſhould appear qualified to diſcharge the duty incumbent upon them as ſovereigns. This was leaving the people to make choice of whom they thought moſt proper to govern; and ſurely nothing could be more equitable, for, as the people are the fountain of power, ſo they may give it to whom they pleaſe.

In the ſame manner ſome bodies of people conferred the dignity of government upon a collective body of themſelves, whom they looked upon as the moſt properly qualified to diſcharge ſuch important duties, and when one of the members died, his ſucceſſor was elected by the general ſuffrage of the people; for, as all were concerned in the government as conſtituents, ſo each had a right to make choice of the moſt proper perſon to whom they might, conſiſtent with the laws of ſociety, delegate the power repoſed in them.

You may poſſibly aſk me, whether a kingly or a republic government can moſt contribute towards promoting the intereſts of the people? I anſwer, my dear Frederick, that it ſignifies but little whether power is intruſted to the care of one or an hundred. One man will be a tyrant, and one hundred put together may, if they pleaſe, act in a tyrannical manner. It ſignifies but little whether we are ſlaves to one or ten thouſand, if the ſlavery is the ſame. If a tyrant commands me in Egypt to perform ſomething that is not in my power, and I fly for refuge to Carthage, where three hundred tyrants command me to perform the ſame, where then is the difference?

Upon the whole, my dear Frederick, let me beg that you will not be too much attached to one form of government, as the beſt calculated towards promoting the intereſt of the people may become oppreſſive

oppreſſive when abuſed, and the worſt may even acquire an amiable name, when the ſovereign diſcharges his duty in ſuch a manner as to make him eſteemed the father of his people. Some of theſe thoughts will be illuſtrated in my future letters, for I am now entering upon a new ſubject.

LETTER XII.

I Have often conſidered chronology as of the ſame uſe to an hiſtorian, as mile-ſtones are to a traveller. By it, when properly authenticated, we are led ſtep by ſtep on our journey, but in the accounts of ancient nations, eſpecially reſpecting their firſt formation, we are generally as much miſtaken with reſpect to the time, as a traveller would be were he to look from the top of a mountain, and endeavour to explore the intermediate diſtance of an extended plain that lies between him and the ſea. Chronology, as well as geography, is the hand-maid of hiſtory; for the one meaſures our ſteps on the road, while the other points out to us the bounds and extent of the country through which we are to travel.

Hitherto the hiſtory of the Romans has been ſo much inveloped in fable, and obſcured by diſtance of time, that we could not fix upon the certain period when the events took place, but now we are arrived at a period when light begins to dawn upon the mind, and things are preſented to us in ſuch a certain manner as to be corroborated by the concurring teſtimony of cotemporary hiſtorians, who have had an opportunity of enquiring into the truth, as related by the claſſick authors. I ſhall, therefore, from this pe-

riod, when the kingly government was deſtroyed in Rome, take care that every event be ſet down according to the exact rules of chronology, ſo that while you are reading the accounts tranſmitted to us concerning the Romans, your memory will be refreſhed, and your judgment regulated, and from this period the time commences from the building of Rome.

Ann. 244 All the Romans having expelled Tarquin from the ſeat of ſovereignty, it was natural to expect that a new form of government would be inſtituted conſiſtent with the rights of mankind in general; but herein they were much miſtaken, for the ſenate claimed to themſelves the ſame power that the kings had enjoyed, and the people choſe from among themſelves two perſons, whom they called Conſuls, who were to be a check on the conduct of the ſenate. As the election of theſe officers was made annually, and as their power and authority ended with the year, ſo, in order to ſignalize themſelves by ſome important event, or martial atchievement, they were continually ſtirring the people up to war, and from a conduct ſo inconſiſtent in general with the characters of kings, who ſpend moſt of their time in idleneſs, the Romans ſoon became great, and the people acquired real glory.

The two firſt conſuls, choſen by the people, were Brutus and Collatinus, for reaſons that will appear extremely obvious. Brutus had been in a manner proſcribed by the tyrant whom he had dethroned, and Collatinus had been deprived of a virtuous and beloved wife by the brutal behaviour of the inhuman tyrant's ſon. It was natural to ſuppoſe that two ſuch men who had ſuffered ſo much from a mercileſs tyrant, would ſupport thoſe

rights

rights for which they had ventured their lives and fortunes. Undoubtedly the choice was the effect of the moſt mature and ſteady deliberation, and it conveys to us an idea, that the people of Rome, even in that barbarous age, were not inferior in knowledge to ſome who live in the moſt civilized countries.

Conſiſtent with the characters of thoſe who acquire popularity in conſequence of acting conſiſtent with the laws, they reſolved to revive ſuch inſtitutions as had been trampled on and ſet aſide during the reign of the tyrant. They ordered new officers to be appointed for the regulation of religious affairs, and to conſiliate the affections of the people, they ordered public aſſemblies to be called in order to inſpect into their proceedings, that they might receive the public approbation.

It is, however, impoſſible to bring about a revolution without incurring the diſpleaſure of ſome perſons, and too often ſome of the moſt dignified in the ſtate. Many of the young nobility had been advanced to dignity in conſequence of their attachment to the late king. The new forms of government naturally ſtripped them of their titles, as well as their honours, and now that they were reduced to the ſtate of humble citizens, they began to form a ſtrong party in order to over-turn the government and eſtabliſh royalty in the ſame manner as it was in the days of Tarquin. They could not bear the thoughts of ſubmitting to the ſame laws that regulated the conduct of the meaneſt individuals, and their number increaſed ſo faſt, that the nephews of Collatinus, and the ſons of Brutus were led into the general conſpiracy.

The conſpirators having communicated their intention to Tarquin, he ſent ambaſſadors from

Etruria to Rome, to demand a reſtitution of his effects, that had been detained, when he was dethroned; but his ſole intention was to ſound the inclinations of the people, in order to know whether they were ripe for a revolt, ſo as to re-place him on the throne with the ſame power that he enjoyed before he forfeited his title to the regal dignity, by trampling on the rights of the people.

Juſt when the conſpiracy was ripe for execution, which was to terminate in the death of the conſuls, and the reſtoration of the tyrant to the throne, a diſcovery was made that diſconcerted all their ſchemes, and it was done in a manner altogether accidental.

While they were conſulting in the moſt private manner how to bring about the intended revolution, a ſlave, who had concealed himſelf in the room, over-heard what they ſaid, and went and gave information to the conſuls.

You will, my dear Frederick, if ever you live to be a father, have at leaſt ſome notions concerning what Brutus muſt have felt, when his own ſons were brought before him to be judged as conſpirators againſt the commonwealth. The accuſation againſt them being read, they acknowledged their guilt, and at the ſame time mentioned the particulars of the conſpiracy.

This was a moſt affecting ſcene, and it was ſenſibly felt by the other judges who preſided on the bench along with Brutus. Some of them ſhed tears; but Brutus, the perſon moſt nearly intereſted, ſeemed to diveſt himſelf of human paſſions, and remained inflexible. He aſked his ſons if they could advance any thing in extenuation of their guilt, but not receiving any anſwer, he ordered the lictors, or executioners, to do their duty.

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The whole aſſembly of the people looked upon Brutus, for they imagined that the humanity of the magiſtrate would ſink down to the compaſſion of a father; but he remained inflexible; and the lictors having ſtripped the young men naked, firſt ſcourged them with rods in the moſt cruel manner, and then cut off their heads. Brutus was witneſs to all this, but he never changed his looks, nor diſcovered the leaſt emotion of pity in his countenance. This may to you appear unnatural, but it ſerved to eſtabliſh the authority of the conſuls over the Roman people, and his reputation was thereby ſo much increaſed, that he was looked upon more as the father of his country than of his own family. Indeed, he ſucceeded ſo far, that Collatinus, who had ſhewn ſome compaſſion to his nephew, who ſuffered at the ſame time with the ſons of Brutus, was diſcarded as an enemy to the ſtate, and Valerius, ſurnamed Publicola, was elected conſul in his room, as one who preferred the publick good to any ſort of private intereſt whatever.

Such was the end of the firſt conſpiracy contrived to ſet the late tyrant on the throne; and if the methods made uſe of in puniſhing the criminals, were attended with circumſtances of unrelenting cruelty, you will readily acknowledge that the love of their country was much more predominant than any thing of a private nature. Indeed, it is on many occaſions extremely difficult for men to diveſt themſelves of natural affection; but then it ought to be remembered, that the intereſt of the whole community is of much more importance than that of an individual. It is much more neceſſary that a limb ſhould be cut off, than that the whole body ſhould periſh by a mortification. When magiſtrates are called forth to act in the name of the republic,

they ſhould have nothing in view but a regular execution of the law, and then all particular connections ſhould ceaſe, ſo as in the ſmalleſt degree to influence their judgment. They may pity the criminal, but they muſt hate the crime, and ſhut the bowels of compaſſion to the ſufferings of their neareſt relations.

Ann. 246 All the intention of the conſpirators being thus ſeaſonably defeated, before any thing had been done to diſturb the peace of the republic, Tarquin took to his aſſiſtance an armed force, moſt of whom were hired from the Veians, who inhabited a ſmall territory near Rome, and with them he advanced towards the city, in order to regain the power he had forfeited to injured laws. Notice of this was ſent to the conſuls, who prepared to meet him, and repel force by force; the command of the cavalry, or horſemen, being given to Brutus, and that of the foot to Valerius.

Both armies met together near the borders of the Roman territories, and a bloody battle enſued, in which Brutus, who engaged in ſingle combat with Aruns, the ſon of Tarquin, loſt his life, leaving at the ſame time his antagoniſt dead on the ſpot. Victory declared for the Romans, and Valerius remaining complete maſter of the field, buried the dead bodies, and returned to the city in triumph, amidſt the acclamations of the people, who came out in great crouds to meet him. By this victory, the liberties of the people were eſtabliſhed on a more ſolid baſis than ever; but that popularity that Valerius had acquired, made him an object of envy to the principal citizens. He had built a fine palace for his reſidence, and ſome of thoſe who were diſcontented inſinuated that he intended to turn it into a fort, in order to overcome the citizens,

and

and ſo make himſelf king. So jealous were the Romans at that time of an individual domineering over them under the title of ſovereign authority, and ſo jealous ought every free people to be when they imagine their liberty in danger, either in a direct or indirect manner. Under a free government every perſon is, or at leaſt ought to be, as a watchman, and he ought to give notice to his fellow citizens of ſuch encroachments as he thinks are likely to be made upon thoſe rights to which they are by nature entitled.

In order to quiet the clamour that had been raiſed among the people, and to remove every occaſion of jealouſy, Valerius cauſed his palace to be pulled down; and made ſeveral laws, by which the power of the ſenate was more circumſcribed than ever, while that of the people was enlarged, and fixed upon a more permanent foundation than had ever happened ſince the time of Romulus. Every perſon who thought himſelf aggrieved had a right to appeal from the conſuls to the people: no perſon was to aſſume the title of a magiſtrate without the conſent of the whole collective body, otherwiſe any one might kill him upon condition that he could vindicate his conduct before a court of judicature, by proving the perſon whom he had killed to be an impoſtor. Quæſtors or treaſurers were appointed to take care of the public money; and he made ſeveral regulations concerning the lictors or executioners, intimating thereby that they were accountable to the people alone for their conduct, and not to the ſenate or the conſuls: All this was done in order to acquire popularity, and it had the deſired effect, at leaſt for ſome time.

The fatigues that attended all theſe new regulations had ſuch an effect on his conſtitution that he

fell into a conſumption, though not before he had taken into partnerſhip the father of Lucretia, as his fellow conſul in the room of Brutus; but Lucretius did not long ſurvive his election, for he died, and was ſucceeded by Horatius, in whoſe time the people were numbered, and it was found that they amounted to upwards of one hundred thouſand effective men.

This was undoubtedly a wiſe regulation, and ought to be imitated by every ſovereign, for they can never know their own ſtrength unleſs they are acquainted with the number of their ſubjects. By ſuch a practice they are able to learn whether their ſtrength increaſes or decreaſes, and whether they are ſinking down into obſcurity, or riſing up to grandeur. For a ſovereign to know the number of his ſubjects, is like a man knowing himſelf. It enables him to promote ſchemes for their future happineſs, which he can never do without previouſly enquiring whether they are ſo numerous as to be able to aſſiſt him in putting thoſe ſchemes into execution; for nothing can ever be done by the prince for the good of his ſubjects unleſs they conſent to aſſiſt him.

While the conſuls were going on in this manner endeavouring to aggrandize the Republic, and make the Romans a glorious people; Tarquin, who was ſtill alive, did not loſe hopes of regaining the regal authority. He prevailed upon Porſenna, one of the kings, or rather one of the chiefs of Etruria, to raiſe an army, and as that prince was celebrated both for his wiſdom and courage, he marched to the gates of Rome, and laid ſiege to the city.

The conſuls finding the danger to which they were reduced, had recourſe to the ſenate, and it was

wasagreed upon between them, in order to conciliate the affections of the people, that no taxes ſhould be impoſed during the continuance of the war, and that as much corn as could be procured ſhould be ſold to the people at the loweſt price, in order to encourage them to fight againſt the common enemy. After a tedious ſiege that was carried on with great vigour by the aſſailants, who had already made a breach in the walls, the conſuls at the head of the army ſallied forth, and a bloody engagement enſued; both the conſuls were wounded in the conflict, and the Romans now gave up every thing as loſt.

During the confuſion that took place while both parties were endeavouring to get into the city, over the bridge that lay acroſs the Tiber, Horatius Cocles, a valiant ſoldier, who had been placed there, with two others, made ſuch a ſtout reſiſtance, that for ſome time the enemy were driven back, but at laſt being overpowered by numbers, he flung himſelf into the water, and with his armour on, ſwam acroſs to his fellow-citizens, who received him with the utmoſt acclamations of joy.

Porſenna, not quite diſcouraged by the valour of the Romans, reſolved to turn the ſiege into a blockade, and ſo ſtarve the people by preventing the peaſants from bringing them proviſions. Indeed the diſtreſs of the people was ſuch, that it may be conceived, but cannot be deſcribed. They looked upon themſelves as an eaſy prey to the enemy, but ſtill the ſpirit of liberty and a love of freedom was not extinguiſhed among them. The Romans roſe from ſmall beginnings, and, it muſt be acknowledged, that in ſome meaſure, they were, in conſequence of their conduct through a variety

of difficult occurrences, intitled to that glory, which, in latter times, diſtinguiſhed them from all others. Nothing ſeemed too great for them to undertake, and, till a certain period, ſucceſs attended all their warlike operations, as will appear evident to you in ſome of my future letters.

LETTER XIII.

EMBARRASSED circumſtances generally induce great geniuſſes to make their public appearance in the ſcene of action, and diſplay thoſe powers with which they were endowed, who would otherwiſe have remained unnoticed, or mentioned in groſs with the vulgar. When the Romans had given up every thing as loſt, while they looked upon themſelves as ſlaves, and their city devoted to deſtruction, a valiant youth, inſpired with ſuperior courage, ſtepped forth, and told his countrymen that he would procure their liberty, or loſe his life in the attempt.

His propoſal was received with the utmoſt applauſe by the deſpairing Romans, and having diſguiſed himſelf like an Etrurian peaſant, he travelled to the camp of Porſenna, whom he found diſtributing money among the ſoldiers. Porſenna was attended by a ſecretary, and Mutius, the Roman youth, who had undertaken this hazardous expedition, ſtabbed the ſecretary to the heart, thinking he was the king.

The guards immediately took him into cuſtody, and brought him before the king, who demanded who he was, and why he had committed ſo baſe an action as to murder the ſecretary. The heroic youth, with the moſt undaunted courage, thruſt his

his hand into a fire then burning on an altar in the royal preſence, and told the king, that there were three hundred Roman youths, all in the ſame diſguiſe, who had undertaken to murder him, unleſs he retired from before the city.

This had the deſired effect; for no ſooner had Porſenna heard him make uſe of ſuch noble and diſintereſted expreſſions, than he ordered him to be ſet at liberty, and conducted ſafely back to the city, where he was received with the greateſt acclamations of joy, and Porſenna made propoſals towards bringing about a congreſs in order to raiſe the ſiege.

Ten young men, and as many young women, were demanded as hoſtages by Porſenna, and that number being given up, they were conducted to the camp of the enemy; but Clelia, one of the virgins, diſdaining ſlavery, fled from thoſe who were appointed to conduct her, and ſwam acroſs the Tiber on horſeback, while the enemy were throwing an innumerable ſhower of darts at her. Upon her arrival in the city, ſhe went to the conſuls, who being afraid that Porſenna might look upon her conduct as an act of perfidy, ordered her to be ſent back, rather than violate the faith of public treaties. Porſenna, who was endowed with all the courage and generoſity peculiar to a great hero, not only ſet her at liberty, but alſo gave her leave to chuſe as many of the hoſtages of the oppoſite ſex, as ſhe ſhould think proper, all of whom were to be permitted to accompany her to Rome. The generous young woman, with a modeſty peculiar to her ſex, only made choice of ſuch as were under fourteen years of age, intimating at the ſame time, that they were too young to be ſlaves, as all hoſtages are ſuppoſed to be.

Peace

Peace being thus concluded between the contending parties, nothing of importance happened during the ſpace of ſix years, only that ſome of the Sabines revolted, but they were ſoon brought into ſubjection, and Poſthumus, who overcame them, was honoured with a public triumph, though not in the ſame manner as in latter ages. Inſtead of riding in a chariot into the city, and being met by the ſenators in their robes, he was obliged to walk on foot, conducted by the Patricians; and this was done in order to ſtimulate him and other military officers to aſpire at greater glory in all future engagements. He had been once defeated by the enemy, and therefore it was conſidered as an indelible ſtain upon his character, till ſuch time as he ſhould regain his former title to honour, by ſome atchievement that would enlarge the power of the commonwealth.

Soon after this affair, the people of Rome complained that the affairs of government were not duly adminiſtered, and Tarquin, who was ſtill alive, having received notice of their diſcontents, reſolved to avail himſelf of ſo favourable a circumſtance. He brought the Latins over to his intereſt, and having raiſed a great army, he ſeduced ſome of the Romans from their allegiance to the commonwealth, and propoſed to beſige the city in form, not doubting but as his plan was deeply laid, ſo the execution of it would be attended with the deſired ſucceſs.

In peruſing the moſt important parts of hiſtory, I have often been ſurpriſed that the beſt regulated form of government cannot prevent abuſes. The Romans had complained of the ſlavery that they ſuffered under their kings, and yet when they eſtabliſhed a commonwealth, they found that they had only changed maſters; for tyranny received only a different

a different name. Plunder and agriculture were all the motives to obedience under the king, and by theſe two they procured a ſubſiſtence. This was ſuitable to the genius of a barbarous people, and the kings encouraged it in order to keep them in proper ſubjection; but when Tarquin was expelled from the ſeat of royalty, the ſenators and the Patricians took all the lands as their own property; ſo that nothing was left to reward the ſoldier for his toil. By theſe practices the ſoldiers had nothing to expect but miſery and wretchedneſs, for they were obliged to borrow money on an exorbitant intereſt, and ſo rigorous were the laws, that the creditor had a right to ſeize the body of the inſolvent debtor, and keep him in ſlavery till the debt was paid. This increaſed the diſcontents of the people, who could not bear the thoughts of ſlavery, and after many fruitleſs attempts to obtain a redreſs of their grievances, they preſented remonſtrances to the conſuls, all which were either diſregarded or treated with the ſame contempt as if they had been the moſt arbitrary tyrants.

All theſe circumſtances concurring together ſeemed extremely favourable towards re-inſtating Tarquin on the throne, ſo that when the conſuls went to levy men to carry on the war, the people told them, that thoſe who reaped the emoluments ariſing from the fruits of the earth, ought to venture their life in ſupport of their country, and not transfer it to thoſe who were to receive nothing but poverty or death for their labour. "It is little "to us (ſaid they) whether we ſtarve in Rome or "any where elſe; we have thrown off kingly go-"vernment becauſe Tarquin was a tyrant, but "inſtead of one tyrant, we have got three hundred. "Let, therefore, a decree paſs the ſenate, by "which

" which all our debts ſhall be cancelled, and offer " us proper rewards, after which we will take the " field in defence of the liberties of our country. " We were not made to be trampled on by thoſe " to whom we have delegated plenary powers. We " are free-born Romans, and we will live and die " as ſuch. We will ſupport the liberties of the " commonwealth as long as we are properly pro- " tected; but if we are to be treated as ſlaves, we " care not who domineers over us. We are willing " to venture our lives in defence of all that our " anceſtors held dear; but if we are to be denied " the neceſſaries of life, it ſignifies but little who " are our maſters, or whether they are kings or " ſenators."

This ſpirited conduct of the people alarmed the ſenators to ſuch a degree, that they began to conſider themſelves as in very critical circumſtances; and having in vain endeavoured to appeaſe them by fair promiſes, they were obliged to conſult on the moſt proper methods to be uſed towards producing ſuch ſalutary effects. Some of the ſenators propoſed, that the names of all thoſe who inliſted to ſerve in the army, ſhould have their debts cancelled; while others refuſed to agree to that motion, only inſiſting that none of the ſoldiers ſhould be moleſted during the war. This, however, did not ſatisfy the diſcontents of the people; for they had no confidence in the ſenators, and therefore imagined that when they returned victorious from the war, their chains would be rivetted more ſtrongly than ever, ſo that they ſtill perſiſted in having their grievances redreſſed before they took the field.

Their numbers continued to increaſe every day, and many of the moſt ſubſtantial part of the citizens joined them, partly from a view to have a new change

change of government; and partly from a fixed belief that the cauſe was good. Such will always be the caſe when men are diſſatisfied with the eſtabliſhed form of government; for when the government itſelf cannot offer them any reaſon for a juſt complaint, they find fault with the governors themſelves, and they ſeek to change maſters, although common ſenſe might indicate that they would not reap any advantage from it.

The ſenate, alarmed to the higheſt degree, and not knowing what to do, reſolved to conciliate the affections of the people, and bring them over to obedience, by making ſuch conceſſions in their favour, as in the end could not fail of abridging their own power, and eſtabliſhing a form of magiſtracy, which has always proved fatal to the liberties of a free people.

The conſuls had abuſed their authority by an improper uſe of it, and therefore having loſt all confidence with the people, who are the fountain of power, it was propoſed that a magiſtrate ſhould be choſen with plenary powers to act not only above the ſenators, but even above the laws, according to his own diſcretion. No conſtraint was to be laid upon him, for in every thing he was to do juſt as he pleaſed, without being accountable either to the ſenate or the people.

It is ſurprizing to think that a free people would thus tamely give up their rights and privileges into the hand of an arbitrary dictator; but then it muſt be remembered that the Romans had ſeen thoſe who pretended to be the guardians of their liberties, act conſiſtent with the character of the moſt arbitrary tyrants. They loved liberty, and they hated ſlavery under whatever name it exiſted; and therefore there is no wonder that they embraced ſuch a propoſal with

with as much avidity as if it had been the title deed to an inheritance.

The name of this new officer was Dictator, and the perſon made choice of to diſcharge ſuch important duties, was one Largius, a perſon at that time in high favour with the people.

Here we have an inſtance how unſettled men can be, even in things of the utmoſt importance towards promoting their happineſs in this world. The Roman people had complained of the conduct of their kings, whoſe power was bounded by that of the ſenate, and, in conſequence thereof, they drove Tarquin from the throne of ſovereignty. One would have thought that they would never more have admitted a perſon to rule over them in an arbitrary manner, but here we find a brave people willing to be ſubject to one rather than to three hundred.

Perhaps in this inſtance they acted as rational creatures, and there is reaſon to imagine that they were well convinced in their own minds, that the dictators, whoſe power and authority was only delegated, could not oppreſs them in a more cruel manner than they had been by the ſenate, who pretended to be the guardians of their liberty.

From this inſtance learn, that no form of government deſerves approbation, unleſs it conduces towards promoting the happineſs of the people.

" Whatever's beſt adminiſter'd is beſt."

LETTER XIV.

I Have not hitherto taken notice of the knowledge of the antient Romans with reſpect to literary merit, in which character their ſucceſſors made

made the moſt diſtinguiſhing figure. Indeed the labour that would attend the enquiry would not be ſufficient to recompence the labourer for his toil. As they were like all other nations, originally barbarous, ſo they roſe by ſlow, though gradual degrees to a ſtate of perfection. Undoubtedly it was many years after the firſt foundation of government among them, before they knew the uſe of letters, and even after that benefit had been conferred upon them, it muſt have been ſome ages before they cultivated literature in a proper manner. There is ſome pleaſure in ſurveying the infancy of the human mind, eſpecially when we find it aſpiring to knowledge, and we trace it through many windings and turnings, till it riſes ſuperior to prejudice, and is enabled to make a proper eſtimate of things.

It is too much the taſte of the preſent age to conſider all thoſe as barbarians who are not as civilized as ourſelves, without reflecting that our anceſtors were once barbarians like them. It requires time to ripen the human judgment, and bring the mind to exert all its powers.

I have already taken notice that Numa Pompillius had ſome books that contained his offices of devotion to the gods; but it is my opinion they were only ſcrolls with a few hieroglyphics upon them, which we might underſtand, although they could be of no ſervice to us in the preſent age. Letters were not then known among the Romans, ſo far as we are able to learn from hiſtory; and as it is generally allowed that they received them firſt from the Greeks, ſo they could not become poſſeſſed of them till many ages afterwards, as I ſhall endeavour to make appear in the ſubſequent part of this work. But I muſt proceed with the narrative,

and

and ſhew you in what manner the Romans, who looked upon themſelves as a free people, could ſo tamely give up their liberty to an arbitrary dictator, who, inſtead of obeying the laws, was intruſted with plenary powers to make new ones, according to his own will and inclination.

No ſooner was Largius inveſted with the title of dictator, than the populace placed him upon a throne, attended with the proper officers, and there, in the moſt authoritative manner, he commanded that ſuch levies ſhould be made as he thought neceſſary towards carrying on the war.

The new created dictator aſſumed ſuch power, that the people trembled, eſpecially when they conſidered that by one ſingle act, they had raiſed him to a higher dignity than what any of the kings of Rome ever enjoyed; for they had taken the power from themſelves, and conferred it upon him.

Largius having raiſed the ſupplies neceſſary for carrying on the war, went out againſt the Latins, whom he ſubdued, after which he returned to Rome, and, conſiſtent with the original condition of his agreement, reſigned the office of dictator, after he had enjoyed it with honour and reputation ſix months.

The Latins had agreed upon a truce; but next year, while Poſthumus was dictator, they made an incurſion into the Roman province, and the dictator went againſt him with a great army. When they came to the field of action, Poſthumus ordered all the horſemen to take the bridles from off their horſes, in order that they might ruſh more violently upon the enemy, and at the ſame time he poſted the ſtandard-bearer in among the Latins, that the Romans might either reſcue him, or entail upon themſelves

themſelves everlaſting diſhonour, as not worthy of the name of free citizens.

Such conduct in a general may ſeem altogether conſiſtent with the manners and cuſtoms of a barbarous people; but it ſhews, at the ſame time, that he was no way acquainted with the military art, which requires the moſt cautious ſkill, and the moſt inlarged prudence.

The Latins, however, were as ignorant as the Romans, and therefore they were obliged to conclude a treaty of peace with their victorious conquerors, giving them at the ſame time hoſtages for the faithful performance of all the ſtipulated conditions. Thus you ſee, that promiſes and obligations are of a ſacred nature even among barbarians. And if ſo, ſurely they ought to be attended to by us. We do not deſerve the name of members of ſociety, unleſs we are faithful in performing every thing to which we bind ourſelves by promiſes. The Latins were convinced of the ſuperior power of the Romans, and therefore they made a truce, that the war ſhould not be renewed for a certain time. The dictator of the people, ſenſible that he had done his duty to ſerve the commonwealth, accepted of their ſubmiſſion; and when he retired, crowned with the applauſes of the people, he laid down his authority, and retired to a private ſtation.

From the valiant conduct of the ſoldiers already mentioned, one would have thought that they were entitled to the higheſt reſpect from the people, and that all their debts would have been cancelled when they returned to Rome. But quite the reverſe happened, as will appear from what I am now going to lay before you.

The office of dictator was now at an end, for no new one had been choſen ſince the death of Poſthumus,

humus, and proſecutions were commenced againſt the ſoldiers for the payment of their debts: This was what they had not the leaſt thoughts of, and they being clamorous againſt the conduct of the government, the ſenate, who looked upon themſelves as in dangerous circumſtances, made choice of two conſuls of quite different tempers, not doubting but the mildneſs of the one would counterbalance the violence of the other. Appius Claudius was one of thoſe many who attend to the letter of the law, but never pay any regard to its ſpirit. He was ſtrictly honeſt with reſpect to diſcharging the duties incumbent upon him as a citizen, conſiſtent with the laws; but he had no regard to human feelings, which at all times ought to be a conſtitutional part in the character of a man of merit.

He looked upon the moſt rigid laws as the only ſtandard of juſtice, and he could not form any notion in his mind that a magiſtrate could, conſiſtent with natural equity, recede from the letter although the ſpirit might be diametrically oppoſite.

Servillius was a man of a totally oppoſite character, for his meaſures were as mild as thoſe of the others were rigid. He had been long the favourite idol of the people, and he had never in a judicative capacity carried the ſeverity of juſtice to the utmoſt rigour. He was humane and compaſſionate, and whatever his regard might be to the letter of the law, yet he took care that prudence ſhould triumph over reſentment, and compaſſion ſhould ſhine in a conſpicuous manner upon the ſtern bench of judicature.

In men of two ſuch oppoſite diſpoſitions, we need not be ſurpriſed to find oppoſite inclinations towards redreſſing the grievances of the people. Servillius

was

was for aboliſhing all the taxes, and cancelling the debts owing by thoſe ſoldiers who had ſo bravely diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the war againſt the Latins, becauſe, by doing ſo, they would make them friends of the republick, and ſecure their affection for ever.

But this generous propoſal made by Servillius, was violently oppoſed by Appius, who inſiſted upon a rigorous execution of the laws at the ſame time, obſerving, that if the ſoldiers were diſſolved from the obligation they were under to their creditors, the latter would become loſers of that property to which they had an undoubted title. He added further, that by doing ſo, a door of licentiouſneſs would be opened, and idlendſs would be encouraged among all the lower ranks of people; ſo as to increaſe their inſolence, and induce them to make ſtill higher demands, till all manner of government was overturned.

This declaration between the two conſuls was not ſo ſecretly carried on, but the people ſoon learned their different ſentiments, and therefore they looked upon Servillius as the father of his country, who had nothing in view but that of promoting the intereſt of his fellow citizens. They therefore loaded him with careſſes, and formed cabals againſt the other conſul, Appius, whom they looked upon as an arbitrary tyrant, who wanted to trample upon their rights and privileges to which they were entitled to by nature, as well as the rules of the ſociety to which they belonged.

While the people were deliberating in what manner to redreſs their grievances, a ſoldier came into the Forum with all the ſcars upon him that generally accompany a martial life. He was cloathed in rags, his whole body was emaciated, and it

ſeemed

ſeemed as if he had been ſtarved to death for want of the neceſſaries of life. His appearance excited the compaſſion of the people, for many of them had remembered his being engaged in the laſt war with the Sabines, and they were filled with indignation when he told them that his whole patrimony had been ſeized, and his houſe ſet on fire.

In conſequence of theſe afflictions, he had been obliged to contract debts, and his mercileſs creditor had not only dragged him to priſon, but at the ſame time had ordered the lictors to whip him till he was reduced to the ſtate of one of the moſt wretched beings that ever exiſted.

No ſooner had the people heard the ſtory of the ſoldier, than they flew to arms, intending to take revenge on Appius, as the cauſe of all their ſufferings; but he having notice of their deſign, made his eſcape, and left them to wreck their vengeance upon his family; if by doing ſo, they could ſatisfy their reſentment, which was now wound up to the higheſt pitch.

LETTER XV.

CONVULSIONS in civil conſtitutions, either enable real patriots to prove themſelves the friends of their country, or it aſſiſts tyrants to rivet thoſe chains which they have forged, to deprive them of their freedom. When the people are enraged at the conduct of thoſe who are intruſted with the adminiſtration of affairs, it is neceſſary that ſome who are endowed with lenity, ſhould ſtep forth in order to appeaſe their clamours, and make them, by gentle propoſitions, hearken to the voice of reaſon.

Servillius

Servillius had long been the darling of the people, and when he found that they were likely to proceed to extremities, he, like a good citizen, laid aſide all the marks of conſular dignity, and ruſhing in amongſt them, pronounced, that an account of their grievancies ſhould be laid before the ſenate, and every thing done in order to redreſs them, promiſing at the ſame time, that he would become a moſt powerful advocate for them. To convince them of the ſincerity of his intentions, he ordered a proclamation to be iſſued, that no citizen ſhould be arreſted for debt till ſuch time as the ſenate had taken the grievances of the people into proper conſideration.

No ſooner had Servillius made his addreſs to the people, than they began to diſperſe; for, convinced of the rectitude of his intentions, they did not believe that he was capable of deceiving them. The ſenate met, in order to conſider of the nature of their complaints, but before they could come to any determination, news was brought, that a great army of the Volſcians, one of the neighbouring nations, was marching to beſiege Rome.

No news whatever could have been more agreeable to a brave warlike people, who reſolved to make a virtue of neceſſity, and convince their domineering maſters, that they could not do any thing without their aſſiſtance.

The officers being ſent to make the proper levies of men able to ſerve in the war, thoſe that had complained againſt the conduct of adminiſtration, refuſed to take up arms, and the poor creatures who had been confined for debt, rattled their chains, and aſked, whether theſe were the weapons with which they were to face the common enemy? From this you may learn, that however arbitrary and domineering

neering governors may ſometimes be, yet when the ſenſe of the people is enquired into, they will loſe that influence which their indiſcreet practices have gained, and they will be glad to court the aſſiſtance of thoſe whom they have before deſpiſed.

Servillius, who ſtill acted as the father of the Romans, being ordered, in conſequence of his offices to take upon himſelf the command of the army, was determined to act with the moſt circumſpect prudence, ſo as to gain the affections of the citizens, without injuring the commonwealth, or betraying the liberties of his country.

He ſaw nothing in the city but inteſtine diviſions that required much prudence to heal, and it was hourly expected that the enemy would attack them with a ſuperior force, ſo that death or ſlavery muſt be the conſequence. A proclamation was iſſued, declaring that no citizen ſhould be impriſon'd for debt during the continuance of the war, and that when peace was concluded, they ſhould have all their grievances redreſſed in the moſt ſatisfactory manner.

This proclamation had the deſired effect, for the people flocked in crowds to his ſtandard, and none were more forward than the debtors, becauſe he promiſed them the ſpoils of the enemy's camp, upon conditions that they ſhould come off victorious. Accordingly the Volſcians were defeated with great ſlaughter, and Servillius returned to Rome, attended by the army, who crowned him with laurels, becauſe they looked upon him as the father of his country, and one who had nothing further in view but that of promoting the intereſt of every individual.

One would have thought that ſuch bravery in the ſoldiers would have intitled them to the higheſt approbation from the ſenate, and that new laws would have

have been made in order to redreſs their grievances; but ſo far from its having the deſired effect, which they hoped, in conſequence of the promiſe of Servillius, the creditors were, as before, authorized to drag them to priſon, and confine them in a ſtate of ſlavery, till the debts ſhould be paid. Servillius had promiſed too much, and as moſt of the ſenators were concerned in the claims made upon the ſoldiers, there were no hopes of any redreſs from them.

The poor ſoldiers went up to the Forum with the ſcars upon their bodies, and in vain implored mercy in conſequence of the ſervice they had done their country; but no money was to be had. The ſenators, as ſelf-intereſted, were deaf to all their intreaties, and they ſuffered thoſe brave men to be dragged to priſon, and continued in a ſtate of ſlavery, by whoſe valour the liberties of their country had been preſerved, and refuſed to interpoſe in their behalf. Thus you ſee, my dear Frederick, that the power granted to a creditor to impriſon his debtor, was begun in the moſt barbarous times; and notwithſtanding all our pretences to refinement, the ſame barbarity remains among us.

While the people were meditating on what would be the moſt proper methods to be uſed, in order to enable them to wreck their vengeance on their oppreſſors, they were rouſed by an event that they little expected. The Volſcians, the Equii, and the Sabines, having received notice of the diſcontents that reigned among the Roman people, propoſed to beſiege the city, and when news of that was communicated to the ſenate, the ſoldiers abſolutely refuſed to take up arms till their grievances were redreſſed. This alarmed the ſenate to the higheſt degree; but as deſperate diſeaſes require deſperate

remedies, ſo, in order to appeaſe the clamours of the people, they had recourſe to the old experiment of chuſing a dictator, or at leaſt of appointing one as a candidate to be choſen by the people. This meaſure had been propoſed by Appius to ſome of the ſenators, with a view of getting himſelf inveſted with that dignity; but the majority were againſt him, on account of the violence of his temper. They knew that he had been already inveſted with power, and they knew that he had abuſed the power repoſed in him, ſo that they were determined to make choice of one who would be acceptable to the people.

Accordingly, after much altercation, the choice fell upon Marcius Valerius, one who had long been the favourite of the public, on account of his mild diſpoſition, and at the ſame time he was endeared to them, becauſe of his being deſcended from the hero of that name. He was a real friend to his country, and in order to make himſelf ſtill more the favourite of the people, he appointed Quintus, the brother of Servillius, to be general of the horſe under him in the army.

As ſoon as the people were aſſembled, he addreſſed them in a ſtudied harangue, and told them, that if they would follow him into the field, he would take care to ſee their grievances redreſſed, and in the mean time he would, in conſequence of their valour, reward them with the ſpoils of the enemy.

The office of a dictator being altogether abſolute, without any manner of controul, he ordered all their creditors to diſcharge them of their debts, and commanded them to follow his ſtandard. This had the deſired effect; for the people, who looked upon him as their deliverer, immediately took up arms,

arms, by which the enemy was defeated, and all the lands which they enjoyed, and which had not been taken from the Romans, were diſtributed among them; and by theſe lenitive meaſures, the dictator acquired great reputation from the citizens in general, while he became an object of love among the ſoldiers, who looked upon him as more than human.

The war being concluded in ſo honourable as well as ſo advantageous a manner, the dictator returned to Rome, and requeſted that the ſenate ſhould perform the promiſes he had made to the people. His propoſal, however, was rejected by a great majority, who had been gained over by Appius and Valerius not willing to diſoblige the people, by holding an office in which he could not ſerve them, reſigned it at the age of ſeventy, and returned to a private ſtation.

This meaſure inflamed the people to the utmoſt, for they ſaw that although they had been indulged with the privilege of chuſing dictators, yet even thoſe men, cloathed with plenary powers, had it not in their power to ſerve them. The ſenate was a controul upon all their nations, and what was ſtill worſe, they croſſed their inclinations, and prevented them from complying with the promiſes they had made, in order to encourage the people to take up arms. By theſe means, all confidence ceaſed to ſubſiſt between the legiſlative and the executive power; for unleſs governors act conſiſtent with the dictates of truth, they cannot, upon any account whatever, be looked upon as proper members of ſociety, nor fit to have any ſhare in the government of civil ſociety.

While the ſenate were deliberating in this manner how to act, they thought of a new expedient, by

which they intended to impoſe upon the credulity of the people. They aſſerted, that there was a neceſſity for raiſing new levies, becauſe of another approach of the enemy; but the citizens were ſo inraged, that they refuſed to take the field. Accordingly, gathering together in one body, they put themſelves under the command of Sicinius Bellutus, a very popular perſon, and, according to his direction, they marched to one of the mountains adjoining to Rome, and there ranged themſelves in proper order. This was an alarming circumſtance to the ſenate; and as moſt of them had children or relations concerned in it, they were under ſome difficulty in what manner to proceed. After ſome conſultations, they ſent ambaſſadors to the mutinous, but received an anſwer no way ſatisfactory. The ſenators were too haughty to comply with any of the people's requeſts, and the people had been too long oppreſſed to accept of life while ſlavery was to be annexed to it.

This induced the ſenate to conſider of the moſt proper methods to be uſed in order to calm the complaints of the people, and bring thoſe back to their proper places in the city, who had been induced to take up arms againſt the commonwealth, and ſo become the enemies of their country.

LETTER XVI.

SUCH of the ſenators as had the intereſt of their country at heart were willing to redreſs the grievances of the people, among whom was Menenus Aggrippa, a very popular man, who had long been the favourite of the citizens. He repreſented, like an able politician, that the lower orders

orders of the people were the ſtrength of the community; for as their labour ſupported it in times of peace, ſo their valour protected it when a new war broke out.

In theſe generous ſentiments he was ſeconded by Valerius, the late dictator, who told the ſenate that they had acted in a baſe manner, by endeavouring to enſlave the people, in order to make themſelves rich with the ſpoils which they had got from them by illegal methods.

When he had done ſpeaking, Appius, who ſtill retained his rigid notions of obedience to the letter of the laws, ſtood up, and obſerved, that if the requeſts of the people were granted, conſiſtent with the nature of their inſolent demands, then there would be no end of their clamours, becauſe the populace never know when to ſtop, but go on from one degree of extravagance to another, till they involve the whole commonwealth in confuſion, and ſo promote anarchy among all ranks of beings, without ever conſidering themſelves as ſubordinate.

That flattery might not be wanting in order to accompliſh his favourite purpoſe, he told the ſenate that the young patricians were able to ſupport the laws, and to bring into ſubjection all thoſe who refuſed to be obedient to them.

The conſuls, who had been newly elected, ſaw that the ſenate was driving things to extremity; for moſt of the ſenators were the oppreſſors of the people, and their ſons, many of whom were then in the aſſembly, behaved in a very indiſcreet manner. They, therefore, in conſequence of the power lodged in them by the conſtitution, put an end to the meeting, and at the ſame time informed the young patricians, that if they did not act with more modeſty at their next meeting, they would order the

lictors to take them into cuſtody; nor ſhould any under a certain age be admitted into the ſenate.

A meeting was ſoon after called by the conſuls, but Appius remained inflexible, although he ſaw that his obſtinacy muſt either ruin himſelf or the republic. After much oppoſition by thoſe who looked upon it as their intereſt to oppreſs the people, it was carried by a great majority, that ambaſſadors ſhould be ſent to the people with offers of peace in order to induce them to return to their duty, as members of the ſtate, whoſe labour, as well as their other ſervices, were abſolutely neceſſary to promote its dignity and honour.

The commiſſioners, ſent in the name of the ſenate to treat with the people, were ten in number, and that they might acquire the greater degree of popular applauſe, Menenieus Agrippa, with Valerius and Largius, who had been dictators, were ſent along with them. This was a ſcheme well concerted by the ſenate, for theſe three men being the objects of the peoples love, there was not the leaſt doubt but they would enter into an accommodation with them, which they would never have done had they been ſuch of the ſenators as had incurred their diſpleaſure. The conference was opened by Largius on the one ſide, and Sicinius Lucius Junius on the other. The firſt repreſented the neceſſity the ſoldiers were under to return to the city, where their grievances would certainly be redreſſed; but the ſecond inſiſted that no confidence could be placed in the ſenate, who had no ſooner got them to undergo the fatigues of a war, than they dragged them to priſon for debts which they had promiſed to cancel. There was too much truth in the laſt aſſertion, and the commiſſioners could not deny it; but although they were willing, if poſſible, to bring

bring about an amicable agreement between both parties, nothing was done till Meneus Aggrippa ſtood up and repeated to them the following well-contrived fable.

" It was common in former times for every part " of the human body to aſſert its own right, and " each part was ſuppoſed to be able to ſpeak. Ac- " cordingly they all reſolved to revolt againſt the " belly, and they urged, as an excuſe for their con- " duct, that they were not under any obligation " to toil in order to ſupport it, while it did nothing " for them. This reſolution they put in practice, " but they ſoon diſcovered their error, as they " found that without the belly they could not ſub- " ſiſt. They found that it was the place from " whence they were nouriſhed, and therefore, un- " leſs they contributed towards its ſupport, they " themſelves muſt periſh."

There is not the leaſt reaſon to doubt but the populace would draw ſuitable inferences from a fable told in ſo ſimple a manner, and ſo it happened with the Romans, who were all ſo much captivated with the natural unaffected eloquence of the orator, that they propoſed putting themſelves under his protection in order to be conducted back to Rome. This reſolution of the people was violently oppoſed by Lucius Junius, who, although he ſeemed to treat with reſpect the officers of the ſenate, yet he ſaid that no confidence could be placed in them, unleſs they would allow them full protection, and cancel all the debts for which they had been ſo illegally confined; and at the ſame time inſiſted that they ſhould have officers choſen from themſelves, who ſhould at all times be ready to hear their complaints, and give a proper account

of them to the ſenate, in order to obtain a redreſs of grievances.

As Lucius Junius was one of the greateſt favourites of the ſoldiers, ſo they liſtened in the moſt earneſt manner to his ſpeech, and it is well known that the laſt ſpeaker has the greateſt influence on the minds of the vulgar, who are not able to compare given propoſitions with ſuch objections as may be made to them.

The commiſſioners, however, were obliged to comply with their requeſt, and meſſengers being diſpatched to Rome, they found the ſenate in the utmoſt confuſion. Inteſtine diviſions ſeemed to threaten the ruin of the commonwealth, and therefore it was reſolved that the people ſhould be ſatisfied in all their demands, and new officers created, who were to be called Tribunes; or rather the tribunes of the people. This meaſure was carried in ſuch an unanimous manner, that no perſon objected to it but Appius, who ſeems to have hated popularity, and was in the whole of his conduct a perſon who ſought the deſtruction of his country, and took pleaſure in oppreſſing the people, by which he procured their hatred, without doing any thing to promote his own intereſt.

I have already obſerved, in ſome of my former letters, that the people are the fountain of power, and that there is a binding obligation both upon the governors and the governed, and here we have a ſtriking inſtance of it. The ſenate of Rome found it abſolutely neceſſary that the requeſts of the people ſhould be complied with; for although they might for ſome time trample on their juſt rights and privileges, yet, in the end, they found that the ſtate could not be ſupported without their aſſiſtance.

At

At firſt theſe tribunes of the people were only five in number; but in after-times they were increaſed to double that number. They were choſen from among the plebians, and, leſt they ſhould abuſe their power, the election was made annually. This was a wiſe regulation; for thoſe who are only intruſted with power for a limited time, are ſuppoſed to make a better uſe of it than ſuch as are to enjoy it for life. When a magiſtrate conſiders that his power will terminate at the end of a year, and that his conduct will then be enquired into, he will conſider every one as ſpies upon him, and he will be more earneſt to acquire reputation, leſt his character ſhould be afterwards branded with infamy.

Their power, at firſt, was great, but it acquired conſiderable additions of ſtrength as their numbers continued to increaſe in the commonwealth. Their doors ſtood open at all times, that the people might have ready acceſs to them, and they were to annul all the orders made by the ſenate, that might ſeem tending towards infranchiſing the public liberties.

They had no enſigns of office upon their perſons, and when the ſenate was ſitting, deliberating upon any inſtitution that was to become binding upon the people, the tribunes ſat at the door till they were called in, and then they had a right to put a negative upon it if they thought proper. They were not allowed to exerciſe any power out of the city, nor could they, conſiſtent with the laws, be abſent from it a ſingle day. So far their power ſeems to have been of a very extenſive nature; but as it was ſtipulated that they ſhould all be unanimous in their reſolutions, ſo if one was gained over by the ſenate, the reſt might look upon all they did as utterly ineffectual. This was a grand maſter-piece of art in the ſenate; for out of ſuch a number,

they never doubted but, by bribes and promiſes, they would be able to bring one over to their aſſiſtance, and conſequently penetrate all the deſigns of thoſe who wiſhed well to the people.

Such was the power intruſted with the firſt tribunes of the people, who were to redreſs all their grievances, and thoſe made choice of at firſt were the following. Sicinius Belutus, Lucius Junius, Caius Livinius, Albinus, and Icilius Ruga, men of known integrity, who, in conſequence of their good actions, had endeared themſelves to the populace, who looked upon them as men in whom they could place the moſt unlimitted confidence.

All theſe things being properly ſettled, an order was made by the ſenate, by which the debts of the citizens of Rome were to be cancelled, and the people, as well as the ſenators, having ſacrificed to the gods, nothing was to be ſeen but tranquillity among all ranks of people. The wound that had been made in the conſtitution was healed; the city began to re-aſſume its former ſtate of importance; every one returned to his duty, and all the animoſities that ſo long ſubſiſted in Rome, ſeemed now to be healed. The people having repreſentatives choſen to act in their ſtead between them and the ſenate, looked upon their liberty as in a manner inviolate; but we ſhall ſee the effects of theſe things in a future period of this hiſtory.

LETTER XVII.

A. C. 260 WHERE there is a continual ſtruggle carried on between the governors and the people, if it is done in moderation, it keeps alive the ſpirit of liberty, becauſe each party becomes

comes watchful over the conduct of the other. The people in any ſtate may make a bad uſe of their power as well as the magiſtrates; for they may, by licentiouſneſs, encroach on thoſe laws which they themſelves have made, and to which they have promiſed obedience.

The people of Rome had, by their oppoſition to oppreſſive meaſures, brought the ſenate to liſten to the voice of reaſon, and comply with their demands. We are now to relate the actions of the Romans in an age when the ſenate making again an improper uſe of their power, the people were driven to the neceſſity of aſſerting their own importance, and eſtabliſhing their liberties on a more permanent foundation than ever.

The tribunes of the people reſolved to diſcharge their duty in ſuch a manner, that the ſenate ſhould be confined down to act conſiſtent with the laws, and for that purpoſe they procured the privilege of chuſing two of their own number annually, who were called Ædiles. The power of theſe officers was very great, for they were to take care that no man purchaſed any more land than was allowed by law; all nuiſances were to be removed by their order; they were to ſee that the city was properly ſupplied withwater; that the buildings, both public and private, ſhould be kept in proper repair, and prevent the monopoly of proviſions. In a word, all immoralities were to be ſuppreſſed by them, ſo that they were as ſpies upon the conduct both of the ſenate and people.

Theſe were great privileges, and they were ſo agreeable to the inclinations of the people, that they chearfully took up arms and defeated the Volſci and the Antiates, who had advanced within a few miles of Rome. Coriolanus, formerly named Martius,

Martius, behaved with the greateſt courage during the engagement, and contributed towards taking the city of Corioli.

Theſe advantages gained over their enemies by the Romans made the people more inſolent than ever; and as agriculture had been neglected for ſome time, ſo the prices of all ſorts of proviſions were raiſed, and at laſt a famine enſued. Nothing but murmurs were to be heard in every part of the city; and although the ſenate did all they could to redreſs their grievances, yet, they being deſtitute of the neceſſaries of life, they threw the blame upon the patricians, who, they ſaid, had purchaſed the corn, in order to ſell it out at an exorbitant price. The ſenate ſent ſeveral of the citizens to Velitra, a city that had been taken from the Volſcians, and this meaſure was looked upon as a grievance. The tribunes intimated to the people that their fellow-citizens were only ſent out of the way in order to increaſe the power of the ſenate, who would again trample upon their liberties. Their being ſent to Velitra was conſidered as little better than baniſhment from their native country; and that nothing might be wanting to aggravate every circumſtance, it was given out that Velitra had been depopulated by the plague.

Both the conſuls and the tribunes took care that theſe reports ſhould be ſpread among the people, who inſiſted on an aſſembly being called, which was readily complied with. When they met, the tribunes and the conſuls ſpoke in their turn, and each did all in their power to aggravate the complaints of the people. The conteſt now became warm between the conſuls and the tribunes; for diſputes aroſe concerning the extent of their power, each party contending that they had a right in preference

ference to the other. The tribunes declared that they were the repreſentatives of the people, choſen by their voluntary conſent, and intruſted with plenary power to act in their ſtead. This declaration gained them the approbation of the multitude, who looked upon them as the ſacred guardians of their rights and privileges, and therefore an act was made, that while the tribunes ſhould be ſpeaking to the people, no perſon was to interrupt them under the ſevereſt penalties. Here we find their power again increaſed, ſo that they became formidable to the ſenate, and were altogether the idols of the people, who, while they were raiſing them to grandeur, never conſidered that they were laying a very ſolid foundation for erecting a tyrannical ſuperſtructure.

The famine that raged in the city induced the people to go into the territories of their enemies, whom they robbed of their proviſions, all of which they brought home to their ſtarving families. The next ſeaſon they had a very plentiful crop; but that ſerved only to increaſe the popular diſcontents, ſo that nothing but grievances were complained of. The king of Sicilly, having ſent them a preſent of corn in a fleet of ſhips, and ſome more having been purchaſed by the public money, their clamours increaſed, and their paſſions were inflamed beyond all manner of bounds. They repreſented the ſenate as guilty of raiſing taxes by extortion, and then ſquandering away the money for corn at a time when they did not ſtand in need of it.

Violent diſputes aroſe in the ſenate concerning the manner in which the corn was to be diſtributed; ſome being of opinion that the people, who had ſerved in the war, ought to have ſome of it beſtowed upon them gratis, as a reward for their labours.

labours. Others of the ſenators thought it would be moſt prudent to ſell it at a low price, and replace the money in the treaſury, in order to ſupport the exigencies of the ſtate.

This meaſure was very near being embraced by the majority, and undoubtedly would have paſſed into a law, had it not been for the violent temper of Coriolanus, who addreſſed them in words to the following import.

"Shall we, who are, as ſenators, intruſted with "the privilege of making laws, thus ſuffer our "rights to be torn from us by a factious rabble, "who know not how to ſet bounds to their exor- "bitant demands? Shall two powers be ſuffered "in Rome? or ſhall tribunes give laws to the "ſenate. I inſiſt that none of the corn be diſtri- "buted till ſuch time as the people are brought "back to a ſenſe of their duty; and if they do not "reliſh my propoſal, let them leave the city, and "once more ſeek refuge in the mountains. Their "inſolence is now become intolerable; and if we "ſuffer them to go on with their encroachments, "we ſhall ſoon have nothing but the ſhadow of "power left."

A ſpeech delivered with a warmth peculiar to the ſpeaker, was not calculated to heal the public diſſentions; for the people looked upon Coriolanus as an enemy to the ſtate, and their rage was more incenſed than ever. Nothing but uproar was to be ſeen in every part of the city, and had not the tribunes reſtrained them, they would have wrecked their vengeance upon the whole body of the ſenators. Coriolanus, however, was marked out as an object of their higheſt reſentment; but although he knew that the whole of the popular fury was ready to break out upon him, yet he treated all the threatnings

threatnings of the people with the moſt ſovereign contempt.

The tribunes ſummoned him to appear before them in order to anſwer for his conduct as a traitor to the ſtate; but when he looked back upon the great ſervices he had done to the public, and his own abilities, both as a legiſlator and a commander, he refuſed to appear, upon which the ædiles were ordered to take him into cuſtody.

The young patricians being enraged to think that their favourite hero ſhould be ſo far diſgraced as to be brought by force before the tribunes of the people, gathered together in a large collective body, and having defeated the ædiles with their attendants, they brought Coriolanus off in triumph.

It is impoſſible to expreſs the confuſion that took place among all ranks of the citizens; for nothing was to be ſeen but one continual ſcene of uproar. A civil war ſeemed depending, and all thoſe who had the intereſt of their country at heart, felt for her bleeding wounds. The conſuls ſaid all they could to appeaſe the clamours of the people, but the tribunes declared, that nothing would ſatisfy them unleſs Coriolanus ſhould be thrown from the Tarpeian rock as a terrible example to all thoſe who for the future might preſume to encroach on the rights of free citizens.

In conſequence of that declaration, they were going to lay hold upon him in order to put their threats into execution; but the young patricians, who had been of ſuch ſignal ſervice to him before, reſcued him a ſecond time from the jaws of deſtruction.

The people were divided into parties, neither knowing in what manner they ought to act; for while they were unwilling to diſobey the orders of their

their own tribunes, who had been choſen by their voluntary conſent, they could not bear the thoughts of hurting their general, who, in ſo heroick and glorious a manner, had defended in battle the liberties of their country.

The tribunes looked upon the conduct of the citizens as altogether inconſiſtent with their natural rights and privileges, and at the ſame time doubting their authority would be brought into contempt, they propoſed that he ſhould be brought to a trial before the whole body of the people, from whoſe judgment no appeal could lay.

The patricians, eſpecially the young ones, ſtill looked upon Coriolanus as innocent; but, leſt they ſhould too much exaſperate the people, they prepared to comply with their requeſts, and a day was appointed for him to make his defence in publick.

Under ſuch circumſtances it was requiſite that the perſon accuſed ſhould aſk for a copy of the articles that were to be exhibited againſt him, and conſequently he was informed by the tribunes that he was an enemy to the ſtate, and that he wanted to eſtabliſh a deſpotic authority among the people, who had, by their own voluntary conſent, aboliſhed kingly government. The charge being thus exhibited, and Coriolanus looking upon himſelf as conſcious of his innocence, declared that he was willing to ſubmit to an open trial, not doubting but he would be acquitted by the unanimous voice of his countrymen.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

THE minds of the people were filled with the greateſt expectations, nay, even hopes and fears concerning the deciſion of a trial, that in their opinion was either to deprive them of their liberty, or reſtore them to freedom for ever. Crouds flocked from every part of the adjacent country, and the tribunes loſt no time in order to bring over a majority in their favour. To make ſure of their ſcheme being attended with ſucceſs, they ordered that the antient method of the people voting by centuries ſhould be ſet aſide, and that they ſhould vote ſingly, which ſeemed much more likely to promote what they had in view than the other; for it contributed in a great meaſure to deprive the patricians of their right, by putting all ranks upon an equal footing.

The ſenate, who were unwilling that the commonwealth ſhould be deprived of ſo uſeful a member as Coriolanus, had recourſe to lenient meaſures, and therefore ordered one of the conſuls to make a public harangue to the people.

He put them in mind of the many ſervices that had been done to the ſtate, by the perſon who was the object of their reſentment, and aſcribed the words that he had made uſe of in the ſenate, to the heat of ungovernable paſſion, without any intention to injure them. He further inſiſted, that all the members of the ſenate were intereſted in his favour, and begged that the accuſation againſt him ſhould be confined to the exhibited articles, namely, that of aiming at the regal dignity.

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When he had done ſpeaking, Sicinius, one of the tribunes of the people, replied, that he would take care that every charge exhibited againſt him ſhould be proved by creditable witneſſes to the ſatisfaction of every one preſent, for he was a moſt daring fellow, and the ſtate had too much to fear from the power of his machinations. He added, that the power of the people was abſolute and uncontrouled, while that of the ſenate was delegated, ſo that he would leave nothing undone in order to bring the aggreſſor to Juſtice.

Coriolanus finding the ſtream of popular prejudice running againſt him, and knowing that his greateſt enemies were the tribunes of the people, came into the forum dreſſed in the moſt elegant manner, and addreſſed himſelf to the citizens. He told them, that nothing had been wanting on his part, while they were at war, to promote their intereſt; he enumerated the many engagements in which he had been concerned; the breaches that he had made in the walls of the enemies garriſons; the laurels he had been honoured with, and at the ſame time pointed out the wounds he had received while he was fighting in defence of the liberties of his country. Theſe expreſſions of his had a great effect on the minds of the people; they could not forget what he had done for them, and, inſtead of reſentment for the warm expreſſions he had made uſe of, the voice of pardon echoed throughout every part of the forum. So ſtrong and ſo perſuaſive is eloquence when delivered by one who has a graceful figure, and has on ſome former occaſions been of ſervice to the ſtate. Nothing was to be heard but ſhouts of approbation, till Decius, one of the tribunes, got up into the roſtrum, and made an addreſs to the people in words to the following import:

"My

" My dear countrymen, it was not our intention " when we came here, to aggravate the crimes of " the perſon who ſtands accuſed; for had we done " ſo, we might have ſwelled the catalogue to an " enormous length. We are the repreſentatives of " the whole body of the people, and as ſuch, we " are obliged to give an account of our conduct. " We are the guardians of the laws, and we have " an eſtabliſhed cuſtom among us, ever ſince the " days of Numa Pompillius, that all plunder taken " from the enemy ſhall become the property of the " ſtate, and therefore it muſt be depoſited in the " public treaſury, to defray the expences of go- " vernment. This law is to all intents and pur- " poſes equitable; but the general, who now ſtands " accuſed before you, has infringed it, and applied " that to himſelf which alone was the property of " the public.

" Some time ago he was ſent upon an expedition " into Antium, and although he had conſiderable " ſucceſs, yet he diſtributed the whole of the " plunder among his friends, without paying any " regard to that duty he owed to the public, whoſe " ſervant he was, and to whom he was, conſiſtent " with the nature of the conſtitution, obliged to " give an account of his conduct.

" In diſtributing the property of the public in ſo " ſcandalous a manner, without any regard to thoſe " obligations he lay under as a citizen, is a ſtrong " proof that he wanted only to enrich his friends, " that they might be the more able to aſſiſt him in " trampling on the rights of the people. Tyrants, " in all ages, have endeavoured, by the moſt artful " ſchemes, to ſecure a party in their own favour, " before they pulled off the maſk, and this ſeems " to be the object that the accuſed perſon now before

" us

" us had in view. I do not deſire to inflame the " paſſions of the citizens, but as I am commanded " by them to reſt the charge upon this ſingle article " let him bring witneſſes to diſprove the truth of " what I have aſſerted, and then I will venture to " affirm that he will be honourably acquitted."

The charge being thus in the moſt unexpected manner brought home againſt him, and knowing himſelf guilty, though not with an intention of wronging the public, he had not a word to ſay in his defence. It ſeems he had given away ſome of the ſpoils taken from the enemy, to thoſe who had moſt ſignally diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the war; but this being conſtrued by the populace an offence committed againſt the ſtate, the votes of every one were immediately taken, which were found to be unanimous againſt him, and the tribunes pronounced ſentence, that he ſhould for ever be baniſhed from Rome as an enemy to his country.

The joy that the people teſtified on this occaſion ſeemed to border both on licentiouſneſs and cruelty. Licentiouſneſs, becauſe they began to look upon the power of their tribunes as ſuperior to that of the ſenate; and cruelty, becauſe they had no compaſſion for a man who had ſignalized his courage in their favour on many different occaſions.

The ſenate were ſtruck with conſternation; for every member looked upon himſelf as marked out for deſtruction, becauſe their power appeared to be no more than nominal. They had long eſteemed Coriolanus as the defender of their rights and privileges; but as he was now condemned to perpetual baniſhment, they knew not how ſoon the ſame might happen to themſelves. Nothing, however, could affect the mind of Coriolanus; for ſeeming to riſe even ſuperior to his misfortunes, he went home

home to his houſe, attended by many of the citizens, in order to take leave of his family, and told his wife and mother to think of him no more, as he was for ever baniſhed from Rome. He embraced his children with a tenderneſs that can only be felt by a parent; he kneeled before his mother to teſtify his ſenſe of filial duty, and having claſped in his boſom the wife whom he loved, he tore himſelf from her embraces, and left Rome without one ſingle perſon to attend him.

From this you may ſee how ſtrong the power of the people will always be when they are in a manner unanimous in oppoſing the conduct of thoſe whom they look upon as their oppreſſors. Indeed, they are the fountain of power; for none can be claimed in juſtice, nor exerciſed with ſafety without the ſanction of their approbation. The plebians, who were moſt numerous, triumphed over the patricians, and left them only the ſhadow of power, notwithſtanding their dignified titles and the airs they had aſſumed over the reſt of their fellow citizens.

A ſuppoſition that we have been treated in an ungenerous manner makes a laſting impreſſion on the mind, and even thoſe who formerly were, from motives of conviction, or a principle of duty, friends to their country, have become its moſt implacable enemies in conſequence of being diſcarded as not worthy of the protection of the laws.

Coriolanus had been early inſtructed in the principles of liberty as inſeperably cemented with the exiſtence of the commonwealth; but no ſooner had his fellow-citizens baniſhed him from Rome, than he reſolved to become their moſt implacable enemy. He did not look upon himſelf as any longer a member of the community, and therefore he thought that he might employ thoſe talents againſt

againſt the Romans that had formerly been exerted in defending their rights and privileges.

Reſentment to the higheſt degree took place in his mind; but, in order to wreck his vengeance more effectually upon his countrymen, it was neceſſary that he ſhould find out one who had money and forces to aſſiſt him; for as to himſelf he was a poor exile deſtitute of all the neceſſaries of life, except what aroſe from the benevolence of others.

Coriolanus was no ſtranger to the different paſſions that inflame the hearts of men in different ſtations in life; and as his reſentment was in a manner unbounded and his revenge inſatiable, he reſolved to ſtrike at once ſuch a blow as would, in the end, convince his countrymen, that they had diſcarded him and driven him from all the privileges of a free citizen of Rome, without being able to aſſign the leaſt cauſe for any part of their conduct. He knew that Tullus Attius, a man who had long had great influence among the Volſci, was a bitter enemy to the Romans, and therefore one evening he went into his houſe, and ſat down by the place where the houſhold gods had their abode, without aſking any queſtions, although he knew that it was looked upon as ſacriledge for any perſon to go there without permiſſion. The ſervants were a good deal ſurprized; but as they knew the laws of hoſpitality, ſo they did not take any notice of the ſtranger till they had informed their maſter.

As ſoon as Tullus was informed that a ſtranger was in his houſe who ſeemed to have an air of dignity above the common rank, he came into the houſe, and demanded to know who he was. Coriolanus told him his name, and that he had been baniſhed from Rome for no other reaſon but that of endeavouring to ſerve his fellow-citizens in the moſt faithful

faithful manner. He inſiſted further, that the Romans were torn in pieces by inteſtine diviſions, and that if he had the leaſt intention of bringing them into ſubjection, no aſſiſtance in his power ſhould be wanting to accompliſh ſo deſired an end.

Here, my dear Frederick, you have an inſtance of the danger that will attend every commonwealth in conſequence of diſcarding thoſe generals, who by their conduct and carriage have contributed towards eſtabliſhing its grandeur. Lenient meaſures are always the moſt ſerviceable to heal public grievances; but the populace, notwithſtanding the right they have to power, are generally bent upon extremes. They cannot be brought to the ſober ſtandard of reaſon, but all is oppoſition on the one hand, and revenge on the other. No ſooner is a favourite diſcarded, either by the king or the people, than he becomes the enemy of both, and inſtead of acting conſiſtent with his duty as a good ſubject, endeavours to involve his country in ruin and confuſion.

LETTER XIX.

NO ſooner had Tullus heard him ſpeak than he eſpouſed his cauſe, and treated him with all the reſpect due to his rank, as a brave military officer. When they had conſulted together ſome time, it was agreed that ſome of the Volſcians ſhould be ſent to Rome, in order to ſee ſome games exhibited, and to give a more plauſible colour to their breaking the league into which they had entered with the Romans. Tullus ſent a meſſenger privately to the ſenate, informing them that he had reaſon to fear ſome of his people, who would be preſent at the games, intended to diſturb the peace

of

of the city. This was one of the moſt artful ſchemes that could have been contrived, and it ſucceeded equal to his moſt ſanguine wiſhes; for the ſenate knowing the Volſcians to be a perfidious people, iſſued an order that all ſtrangers ſhould depart from without the walls at a ſtated period before the ſun ſet.

No ſooner had Tullus received an account of the order made by the ſenate, than he called an aſſembly of the Volſcians, and repeated to them that the Romans had been guilty of a breach of the treaty that had been mutually entered into between them, and therefore ambaſſadors were diſpatched to demand an anſwer why they had acted in ſuch a manner; and at the ſame time to demand the reſtitution of ſuch territories as had been taken from the Volſcians during the late war, intimating that if the requeſt was not complied with, hoſtilities would be commenced.

When the ambaſſadors had delivered their meſſage the ſenate, who looked upon them with the utmoſt contempt, told them to return and tell their conſtituents, that if the Volſcians ſhould have the audacity to take up arms on any pretence whatever, the Romans were prepared for them; nor would they ever ſheath the ſword till they had brought them into total ſubjection, and rivetted the chains of ſlavery upon them for ever. Things were now brought to the laſt extremity, and war being declared between both nations, Tullus and Coriolanus were made choice of to command the army of the Volſcians.

They began their operations by invading the Roman territories, and, according to the methods of war in that age, they ſpread deſolation wherever they came, except in ſuch lands as belonged to the ſenators,

ſenators, which Coriolanus deſired might not be injured. The Romans ſeemed to be intirely diſappointed; for the two conſuls who had been elected had neither ſkill nor courage, ſo that Coriolanus took their cities and towns almoſt as ſoon as he made his appearance before them. Some of the neighbouring nations had promiſed to ſupply them with men, but they ſeemed very backward in complying, ſo that after a very feeble reſiſtance Coriolanus took the towns of Bola, Pes, Lavici, and Talerium, all belonging to the Latins, who in vain implored ſuccours from the Roman ſenate, and he made captives of all the people in a Roman town called Circum.

Great cruelties were committed by the Volſcians, for they plundered the people of their moſt valuable effects, and thoſe who made any reſiſtance were immediately put to death.

Wherever Coriolanus went he was ſucceſsful, and the ſoldiers, who ſerved under Tullus, deſerted the ſtandard of their general, and followed the fortune of a man whom they looked upon as invincible. His ſucceſs was indeed ſo great, that not being afraid of any oppoſition, he marched his troops up to a ditch within five miles of Rome, where he pitched his camp, not doubting but he would ſoon be able to ſubdue the city, and puniſh thoſe who had baniſhed him from his native country. Rome was filled with conſternation, eſpecially when they ſaw the enemy ravaging the country adjoining to the walls, and every moment they expected to ſee their houſes reduced to a heap of aſhes. They begged the ſenate to cancel all the crimes imputed to Coriolanus, and once more invite him to come and take his place among them as a free citizen; but their requeſt was treated with contempt; for

the ſenate declared, that it was beneath their dignity to grant a pardon to a traitor, who came to demand it by the aſſiſtance of a foreign power, after he had been baniſhed by the unanimous conſent of the people, who had adjudged him an enemy to the commonwealth; but in conſideration of his former ſervice, had only baniſhed him while it was in their power to have taken his life.

This ſpirited conduct of the ſenate was undoubtedly conſiſtent with their duty as magiſtrates, but then they had not an army ready to oppoſe the conqueror, who approached daily nearer to the city, and ſeemed reſolved to take it by ſtorm. The fear of ſubjection at laſt had ſuch an effect on their minds, that both the ſenators and the patricians reſolved to ſend deputies to him, offering him a free pardon on condition that he would diſband his forces, and return peaceably into the city.

When the ambaſſadors came to Coriolanus, he was ſitting with his principal officers, and, aſſuming the higheſt airs of dignity, he told them that he was now the general of the Volſcians, and therefore he would act for them like a man of honour. He added further, that he would never conſent to grant them peace unleſs all the towns that had been taken from the Volſcians were returned; that they ſhould be admitted to all the privileges of the Roman people; and in order that the treaty ſhould be concluded on the moſt ſolid footing, he gave them thirty days to conſider of it, declaring, that during that time none of their towns ſhould be moleſted by the enemy under his command. He ſaid he had no antipathy againſt his native country, but he would take care to act with fidelity for the people who had intruſted him with the command of their army, and he would force his fellow citizens to acknowledge,

that

that they had, without any ſort of reaſon whatever, baniſhed him from Rome, where his patrimony lay.

Having delivered this meſſage to the Roman ambaſſadors, they retired to inform the ſenate; and in the mean time the Volſcians, under the command of Coriolanus, turned their arms againſt the Latins in conſequence of ſome affronts that they had received from them, and took ſeveral of their towns, after which he returned and encamped his army within ſight of the walls of Rome.

The ſenate not knowing what to do, ſent other ambaſſadors to him, and begged that if he had the leaſt regard for the intereſt of his native country, he would not deſire the people to comply with any conditions that might appear inconſiſtent with their honour. This requeſt had no effect on the haughty ſpirit of Coriolanus, who, looking upon himſelf as ſure of conqueſt, ſent notice to the ſenate that he would give them no more than three days to deliberate whether they would comply with his requeſt, or have their city burnt to the ground.

The whole city was now in confuſion, and as many of the people were afraid that Coriolanus had formed a ſtrong party amongſt them, ſo they fortified their houſes, while others were placed on the walls in order to give an account of the approach of the enemy. Diſcipline was totally neglected, and the conſuls were too much ignorant of the art of war, to be able to propoſe any ſcheme by which the peace of the city could be ſecured, and the common enemy, with the army under his command, defeated.

The tribunes, who had refuſed to ſhew the leaſt favour to Coriolanus while he ſtood in the forum, were now aſhamed to appear in public; for a ge-

neral conſternation had ſeized all ranks of people, from the ſenators down to the plebians. The courage of the Roman people ſeemed to have fled with Coriolanus, and from the higheſt to the loweſt they were like men who had not even power to act in their own defence.

The ſenate ſeeing no hopes left, ſent a third embaſſy to Coriolanus more ſolemn than any of the former; for beſides ſome of the patricians, it conſiſted of a deputation from the high prieſts and augurs, all dreſſed in the garments of their offices.

When they approached the tent of Coriolanus, they fell before him on their knees, and begged, that by all the duty he owed to the gods, and the hopes of rewards that he expected from them, he would withdraw his army, and ſuffer his native citizens to remain in peace. Coriolanus declared to them, that he had the utmoſt reſpect to the religion of his country, but he had been ill-treated by his countrymen, and therefore he would never relax any of his demands till ſuch time as the Volſcians had been reſtored to the poſſeſſions of the towns, that had been taken from them by the Romans, and the act by which he was baniſhed ſhould be cancelled, and buried in perpetual oblivion.

Having ſaid theſe words he diſmiſſed them with the uſual reſpect, at the ſame time adding, that none of his men ſhould offer them the leaſt injury; but when the people who waited on the walls for their return, with longing to hear what ſucceſs they had met with, ſaw them return with ſorrowful countenances, they gave all up for loſt, and looked every moment for the immediate deſtruction of their city.

Such of the people as were addicted to ſuperſtition, crouded into the temples, and at the altars implored,

implored, in the moſt fervent manner, that the gods would be propitious to them, and deliver them from the enemy. Every part of the city was filled with grievances and lamentations, no perſon looking upon himſelf in any other light but as devoted to the deſtructive ſword of the enemy. The women ran about the ſtreets, tearing their hair; the children cried, not knowing the cauſe of their grief, and the men looked at each other in ſilent conſternation.

All hopes having failed them from what could be expected from ſolemn embaſſies, it was reſolved to attack the conqueror upon principles of natural feelings. They knew that, as a commander, he was haughty and inflexible, but at the ſame time they knew, that his heart was ſuſceptible of the moſt tender impreſſions. They therefore reſolved that his wife and mother ſhould go to the camp, and with the moſt earneſt intreaties endeavour to prevail upon him to withdraw his forces.

When the propoſal was made to his mother Veturia, ſhe objected, leſt her ſon ſhould remain as inflexible to her as he had done to the ambaſſadors, but the petitions of the people, and the duty ſhe owed to her country, induced her to comply, and ſhe ſet out from her own houſe, attended by his wife Volumnia, and his two children, together with many of the chief women in the city.

When the women approached the tent, Coriolanus having ſome ſuſpicion of the nature of their embaſſy, was reſolved to treat them with the ſame contempt as he had ſhewed to the ambaſſadors, and therefore called the principal officers of the Volſcians together to be witneſſes of his fortitude. He was ſeated on a throne, and the moment that he was informed his wife and mother were among them with

the children, the pledges of their conjugal fidelity, he came down to embrace them with the duty of a ſon, the love of a huſband, and the tenderneſs of a parent.

Here you may ſee how nature tramples over all the ſtate of formality. The ſon, the huſband, and the father, thoſe companions where the ſolemnity of the prieſts could not make the leaſt impreſſion, and he who paid no regard to his native city as a ſubject, yet was touched with thoſe feelings that are inſeparably connected with humanity.

LETTER XX.

THE mother of Coriolanus falling upon her knees before her beloved ſon, ſpoke to him in words to the following import, while the tears ruſhed down her aged cheeks.

" My dear ſon, did I not bring you up in all the " precepts of liberty incumbent upon a Roman? " and tell me whether I am now your ſlave or " your mother? Shall I call you my ſon, or deteſt " you as my enemy, who ſeeks to trample on the " liberties of your country? The affliction I have " ſuffered in ſeeing you baniſhed from the republic, " is but trifling when compared to the grief and " anguiſh of my ſoul, when I behold you at the " head of a foreign army, ſeeking to inſlave Rome. " Can you, conſiſtent with the principles of natural " reaſon, take up arms againſt the country where " you was born, and where you was foſtered in all " manner of indulgence? Your mother, your wife " and children, are protected by the walls of Rome, " and would you deſtroy that city which contains " all that is dear to you in the world? But let the

" blame

" blame lay upon myſelf, for I am the firſt woman
" who ever gave birth to one who has been an
" enemy to the commonwealth. The conſide-
" ration that I am your mother affects me more
" than any thing I can feel for you. But thanks
" to the gods, time will ſoon put a period to my
" exiſtence; but although I am ready to meet death
" in all its terrors, yet have ſome compaſſion upon
" your beloved wife and tender infants, who, in
" conſequence of your proceedings, muſt become
" abject ſlaves, and ſpend the remainder of their
" time in ſervitude without a friend to comfort
" them."

While the aged matron was ſpeaking, the breaſt of the warrior was agitated with contending paſſions, eſpecially when he ſaw his children imploring his protection, and his wife and mother bathed in tears before him. He was in a manner confounded; he knew not what to ſay, and riſing to his aged mother took her in his arms, and told her, that while ſhe had been attempting to ſave Rome, ſhe had loſt her beloved ſon. He told the army, that Rome was too ſtrong to be taken by ſtorm, becauſe of the Tiber, from whence they received continual ſupplies; and having drawn off all the ſoldiers, he marched back to the city of the Volſcians, where he was treated as a coward, and as one who had betrayed them to the enemy. The diſcontents of the people were heightened by the inſinuation of Tullus, who had long conſidered him as an object of enmity, and in conſequence thereof he was murdered by the ſoldiers, who all conſpired againſt him as a traitor.

The fate of Coriolanus was ſoon tranſmitted to the Romans, and public rejoicings were made for their having got rid of ſo dangerous an enemy,

while a temple was ordered to be erected to the honour of the gods, in the place where his mother fell on her knees before him. That courage which had hitherto diſtinguiſhed the Roman citizens, but ſeemed to be aſleep while they were oppoſed by one of their own members, now began to diſplay itſelf, and having taken the field, they not only defeated the whole army of the Volſcians, but alſo left dead on the field of battle Tullus, who had been ſuch an inveterate enemy to Rome, and ſo unfaithful a friend to the brave but unfortunate Coriolanus.

The general of the Roman army at that time was Spurius Caſſius Viſcillinus, a vain haughty perſon, who looked upon himſelf as ſuperior in merit to all the other citizens. His ambition was ſo great that he took care to conſider the ſervices he did the republic as much ſuperior to what they were, and at the ſame time he treated with contempt all thoſe who ſerved under him.

During the time he had been conſul ſeveral triumphs had been decreed him by the ſenate, and he had acquired ſo much popularity among the citizens, that ſome of the patricians had thoughts that he aimed at the ſole authority over the ſtate. The ſenate had intruſted him with plenary power, in order to make peace upon whatever conditions he thought proper, with the people whom he had reduced to a ſtate of ſubjection, and therefore he thought he could not do better than by making flattering conceſſions to attach them to his own intereſt, ſo as to ſupport him in his ambitious views. He gave them back the greateſt part of their lands, and well knowing that the poor are moſt numerous in all ſocieties, he made them more valuable preſents, which he told them was their inherent rights, and which no perſon could rob them of, unleſs they

they were arbitrary tyrants. Having received the approbation of the ſenate, he made a ſpeech to the people, in which he expatiated upon the ſervices he had done to the commonwealth, and the vaſt numbers of people that he had made tributary to Rome, as the only means of enſuring it's grandeur, and making it the greateſt city that ever exiſted in the world.

He took notice further, that Rome might acquire the name of greatneſs, and yet not enjoy it in reality; for the ſoldiers who had purchaſed their greatneſs at the expence of their own lives, were ſuffered to ſtarve in wretchedneſs and poverty, while the haughty patricians revelled in all manner of luxury. He inſiſted that all the lands taken from the enemy, and which were then claimed by the patricians, ſhould be equally divided among thoſe brave ſoldiers who had conquered them; and he looked upon it as the juſt reward for all the dangers they had undergone. No ſooner had the ſenate heard this propoſal than they were filled with indignation, and the more ſo, becauſe ſome of them were concerned in the iniquitous practices alluded to. This meaſure was called the Agravian Law, and nothing was left undone by the ſenate to prevent its taking place, in which they were ſeconded by thoſe whom Servius wanted to bring over to his ſide, namely, the tribunes of the people, and the more wealthy citizens. Many of theſe had received lands in conſequence of the different victories they had obtained over the enemy, and therefore they conſidered it as altogether inconſiſtent with their natural or acquired rights, that they ſhould be obliged to forfeit them, and ſo put themſelves on a level with the meaneſt of the people. Spurius, not willing to loſe ſight of the favourite

objects upon which he had ſo much placed his affections, had called in ſome of the Volſcians to ſupport his motion in caſe it ſhould be rejected by the ſenate, or himſelf treated as one who acted inconſiſtent with the duty he owed to the Republic.

The ſenate were for ſome time ſo much embarraſſed that they knew not what to do, but at laſt they came to the following reſolutions, namely, that the lands ſhould be diſtributed among the citizens, but thoſe who had ſerved as auxiliaries in the war ſhould not be intitled to any ſhare of them, becauſe they were ſtrangers, and not free citizens of Rome.

For ſome time the people ſeemed in a manner pacified, and the ſenate, who looked upon the conceſſion they had made as inconſiſtent with their dignity, reſolved to leave nothing undone till they had brought the perſon to condign puniſhment, who was the original propoſer of what they conſidered as an infringement on their natural rights and privileges. The quæſtors having received orders from the ſenate, ſent a ſummons to Spurius, commanding him to appear before an aſſembly of the people, and anſwer to the queſtions whether he did not intend to make himſelf abſolute ſovereign of Rome, by overthrowing the commonwealth, and ſetting up kingly government in the ſame manner as it was in the reign of Tarquin.

Spurius was alarmed at ſo unexpected a ſtroke; he knew not what to ſay, for both the tribunes and the ſenate were his enemies. Both were equally concerned in the diſtribution of the lands, ſo that he had none but the loweſt claſs of the people to look to in order to ſupport him in his ambitious views, which he had formed to trample on the rights of free citizens, and eſtabliſh kingly

government

government where it had been aboliſhed as inconſiſtent with liberty.

When he appeared before the aſſembly of the people he aſſumed an air of dignity as if no accuſation had been laid againſt him, and, ſtanding up, looked round among the people, whom he informed that all this had happened in conſequence of his intentions to ſerve them, and free them from the bondage under which they laboured from the ſenate, and the patricians; inſinuating at the ſame time that he was the only perſon left who could promote their intereſt.

This ſpeech, calculated to revive and to influence the paſſions of the people, had not the deſired effect; for both the patricians and the ſenators were ſo much intereſted in the affair, that they made a ſtrong party among the citizens, who were anxious in finding Servillius guilty, upon which he was thrown headlong from the Tarpeian rock, and daſhed to pieces, as an enemy to the Republic, and one who wanted to uſurp the rights of the people.

Such was the end of a man who had done many things to ſerve his country, and promote the intereſt of his fellow citizens; from whence you may learn, that nothing can inſure real applauſe but the love of virtue, while it operates in an active manner upon our hearts. A villain may acquire popularity, though it is ſure to vaniſh like a ſhadow; but thoſe who would be true and faithful ſervants to the community to which they belong, muſt never ſeek to aggravate any meaſure that is in the leaſt inconſiſtent with its real intereſt.

U. C. 274. The hero who had ſo faithfully ſerved his country, being thus removed by a violent death, the ſenate, in order to divert the attention of the people, who were ſtill clamarous for the execution of the Agrarian law, ſet them upon an expedition againſt the Æquii, under pretence that they had made an inroad into the Roman province. Such of the people as lived adjoining to the city diſcovered the utmoſt reluctance in taking up arms till ſuch time as their grievances ſhould be redreſſed; but the conſuls, in order to force them into a compliance, ordered ſome of their houſes to be levelled to the ground, upon which the reſt came and offered their ſervices to the ſtate, upon condition that no violence ſhould be offered to their poſſeſſions.

Good fortune attended all their undertakings, and the ſpirit of liberty that firſt founded the Roman ſtate, raiſed it in the end to the utmoſt height of grandeur. The oppoſition they met with from all the nations that ſurrounded them naturally taught them the art of war, and neceſſity made them courageous. The other ſtates in Italy either became tributary to them or courted their alliance; and a handful of men, who were no more than a banditti of robbers at firſt, became ſo formidable as to give laws to the world: of this I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more fully hereafter, eſpecially when I come to relate ſome of the important events that took place before the deſtruction of the commonwealth.

While the ſenators were contending for what they conſidered as their private property on the one hand, and the people for a redreſs of their grievances on the other, Virginius, one of the conſuls, who had taken upon him the command

mand of the army, was defeated in an engagement with the Etrurians, who, in order to improve their victory, followed him even to the gates of Rome, notwithſtanding Fabius having been ſent to his aſſiſtance with a conſiderable reinforcement. The diſcontents that had ſo long taken place among the citizens now began to increaſe to an intolerable height, and notwithſtanding many offers that were made them, yet they refuſed to inliſt, unleſs the lands taken from he enemy in the late wars were equally divided among them.

In ſuch an extremity the family of Fabii undertook to ſtand up in defence of their country, although they did not exceed in number four hundred men. Near where the enemy had pitched their camp, the Fabii built a fort, where they ſheltered themſelves and made frequent incurſions into the territories of Hetruriam, who thereby became much weakened, by being obliged to ſend out detached parties to oppoſe them. At laſt the Romans became victorious; but the Fabii were all cut off by the Veii, who lay in ambuſcade for them, except one, whoſe family was long after an ornament to Rome, and a prop to the government in the moſt trying times.

LETTER XXI.

THERE is ſomething that fills the mind with aſtoniſhment when we take a view of the riſe of the Roman people; for the more they were oppreſſed in conſequence of the incurſions made into their territories by the ſtates around them, the more ſuperior they became, and the bounds of their empire

empire continued daily to be inlarged. But ſtill they had nothing among them at the period of time I am now writing of, that deſerved the name of commerce, and the people, for want of proper employment, became clamorous againſt each other, and almoſt every day produced tumults in the city.

The people claimed the ſole power of electing the magiſtrates, and as they were not able to judge of the different abilities of men, ſo it frequently happened that they made choice of ſuch as were not fit to diſcharge the duties of ſuch important ſtations. This created many diſſenſions among them; for no ſooner had a conſul reſigned his authority, than the leaſt error in judgment was magnified to a crime, and men were diſgraced becauſe they did not what was not in their power to perform.

Menenius, one of the ten conſuls, was accuſed of having not done his duty, when the family of the Fabii were cut off; and although he was intirely innocent, yet he was fined in a ſum that he could not pay, and therefore, rather than be ſold as a ſlave, he ſhut himſelf up in his houſe, in order to avoid the rage of an incenſed populace, and ſtarved himſelf to death, after he had done all in his power, according to the beſt of his judgment, to ſerve his country.

The Agrarian law was the moſt favourite object the people had in view, and, in order to ſupport it, they reſolved to ſacrifice both honour and conſcience. Fabius and Manlius, two conſuls, who had lately reſigned their employments, were ſummoned before the tribunal of the people, and accuſed of having acted inconſiſtent with the nature of their duty. This occaſioned a freſh inſurection among the citizens, and while they were deliberating upon the moſt proper methods to be uſed in bringing the conſuls to juſtice, Genutius, the tribune,

tribune, who had ſtirred them up to revolt, was found dead in his bed; but no perſon could diſcover any marks of violence upon him.

One would have thought that ſuch a circumſtance would have been ſufficient to have alarmed the ſuſpicions of the people, and induced them to imagine, that the tribune had been privately murdered, in conſequence of a plan formed by the patricians, who were his moſt inveterate enemies; but ſuperſtition got the better of reaſon, and they imagined that the gods had taken him away, becauſe of their own diſobedience to the laws. This was one of the moſt favourable circumſtances that could have happened in order to re-eſtabliſh the power of the conſuls, and they took care to turn it to their own advantage. Thus you may ſee, that in all ages and nations, the credulity of the people will always be ſubſervient to the deſigns that political miniſters have in view. In moſt caſes the people make their own choice, though, on many occaſions, they, who are their governors, put them on.

Nothing appeared ſo proper towards extending the power of the conſuls, as the raiſing of new levies, by which they intended to inliſt all ſuch as were diſcontented, and ſo weaken thoſe that were at home, ſo as to prevent them from being able to aſſert their natural rights and privileges, as free-born citizens of Rome. Many of the people came in to inliſt under the banners of the conſuls, who ſat on thrones with all the enſigns of regal authority, attended by their lictors, who were to execute their orders without heſitation.

While they were going on in this manner, one Volero, a centurion, was made choice of to be a common ſoldier, and as he refuſed to ſerve in any other

other capacity than what he had been in before, the conſuls commanded the lictors to ſtrip and ſcourge him: all which was done in the preſence of the people, whoſe indignation was ſo great, that they joined in a popular tumult, reſcued the unfortunate priſoner from the hands of the lictors, and ſoon after made choice of him as one of their own tribunes. Thus the conſuls, while they were, by an improper uſe of their power, endeavouring to make the patricians abſolute, brought themſelves into contempt, and, by ſeeking to obtain what was in its own nature inconſiſtent with the conſtitution, they found themſelves under an abſolute neceſſity of making conceſſions in favour of the people whom they had injured, by trampling upon their juſt rights and privileges, which they enjoyed both by natural and municipal law.

A ſtrong conteſt was carried on in the ſenate concerning the Agrarian law, and parties were formed on each ſide of the queſtions; ſome being for granting the people no more privileges than what they formerly enjoyed, while others, like wiſe magiſtrates, propoſed that all their grievances ſhould be redreſſed.

Appius Claudius, one of the conſuls, and ſon to the conſul of that name, had conceived an inveterate hatred to the people; and, in a ſpeech that he delivered to the ſenate, he expreſſed himſelf with ſo much warmth, that he was ordered to depart out of the aſſembly, by the tribunes, who were there to act in the name of the people. The ſenate were enraged to ſee one of their own body treated in ſo indignant a manner, and much more ſo, when they heard the tribunes order the lictors to take him to priſon; and therefore they roſe in a body, and reſcued him from the hands of thoſe who were determined

termined to proſecute him with the moſt unrelenting cruelty.

The whole body of citizens were now in an uproar againſt the patricians, and the ſenate; they teſtified their indignation, by throwing ſtones at all thoſe whom they had ſingled out as objects of their reſentment. It was, towards the evening, when this affair happened, and Quintus, the other conſul, who was of a pacific diſpoſition, ruſhed into the middle of the aſſembly, and partly by threats, but much more ſo by the promiſe of redreſs of grievances, prevailed upon them to diſperſe without doing any further miſchief.

During the night every thing was ſilent, but next day the tumults in the city increaſed more than ever: for the plebians continued to aſſert their right, while Appius put himſelf at the head of the young patricians, in order to make a moſt vigorous defence.

While Appius was endeavouring, at the head of the patricians, to make himſelf abſolute maſter of the city, Lectorius, one of the conſuls, having gathered together a large body of the people, took poſſeſſion of the capitol, and reſolved to hold it out to the laſt extremity. Deſtruction now ſeemed to be impending on the city, and there is no doubt but it would have taken place, had it not been for the pacific temper of Quintus, who preferred the intereſts of his country to all other conſiderations. He propoſed that the Agrarian law ſhould be eſtabliſhed by the ſenate, and in that the people aggrieved, who think their demands to be juſt, doubted not but they would be complied with. The ſenate finding that nothing could be done without the conſent and aſſiſtance of the people, reſolved to comply with all their demands, ſo that the

the law was eſtabliſhed in its full force, and the patricians, who had ſo long looked upon themſelves as cloathed with regal authority, were obliged to put up with an empty name inſtead of real power.

There is no wonder that ſuch a law ſhould give offence to a man who had the moſt arbitrary notions in his mind, namely, Appius; and therefore no ſooner had he heard the act of the ſenate pronounced than he looked upon the whole majority as the moſt puſilanimous wretches that ever exiſted. He ſaid that they were not fit to be entruſted with the affairs of government becauſe they did not ſupport its dignity, nor act like men indued with fortitude.

The people were not ignorant of theſe expreſſions, and therefore, ſoon after, when Appius was commanded to take upon him the command of the forces againſt the Volſcians who had made an inroad into the Roman territories, the ſoldiers began to ſhew their reſentment to one who was obnoxious to them in general.

At that time the military diſcipline among the Romans was very rigorous, and Appius, by a natural inflexibility of temper, made it much more ſo than ever, ſo that moſt of the ſoldiers looked upon him as an inhuman commander rather than a benevolent general, who intended to conduct the forces of the Romans againſt the common enemy. This was a moſt ſhocking circumſtance for the general, for no ſooner had the enemy appeared, than the Volcians, who were not half ſo numerous as the Romans, put the latter to flight, becauſe they could not place any confidence in their commander.

Appius did all he could in order to rally his forces, but ſtill in vain, for they actually refuſed to hear him ſpeak. His next deſign was to make an honourable retreat, but they paid no regard to his orders,

orders, and fled without ever conſidering the duty they were under to the republick. Some few of the forces yet adhered to him, and having marſhalled them in proper order, he commanded the lictors to ſtrangle and behead every one of the centurians who had refuſed to obey his orders. That being over, he ordered every tenth man to be taken out from the place he ſtood in the ranks, and he was executed before the army as a terrible example to all thoſe who for the future ſhould diſobey the orders of their general. Here we have an example of the ſeverity of the military laws even in a barbarous age. A ſeverity that can never promote the ends of government; although it may for ſome time ſtrike a ſort of awe or terror into the minds of the vulgar, eſpecially when it is conſidered that they have not an opportunity of aſſerting their own natural rights and privileges. Times, however, when things are carried to ſuch an unreaſonable height, are never favourable to the public; for people may, from motives of neceſſity, be obliged to ſubmit, while at the ſame time they are hatching ſchemes to bring their oppreſſors to condign puniſhment.

The conduct of Appius made him an object of deteſtation to all ranks of people among the Romans, who were below the degree of patricians, but more particularly the ſoldiers, who in that warlike age were the guardians of the ſtate. He did not, however, continue to exerciſe a coercive authority long over his fellow citizens till he was called to an account for his conduct by the tribunes of the people, who inſiſted that the Agrarian law ſhould be complied with, and all ranks of people ſhould ſubmit to it without reſerve or evaſion.

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As he continued to perſiſt in his obſtinacy, a day was appointed for him to make his defence before the people, but when he came he aſſumed the moſt domineering airs, and ſeemed regardleſs whether he ſhould live or die. The tribunes of the people, who ſeemed to have acted from motives of ſound policy, looked upon the conſul as in a ſtate of inſanity, and therefore, in order to do juſtice both to him and the republic, they ordered that his trial ſhould be put off till ſome future time of meeting, that he might be more ready to make his defence. In the mean time he laid violent hands upon himſelf, in conformity with an unnatural notion, that was beginning to gain ground in that age, and which, in ſubſequent times, was looked upon as an inſtance of heroiſm.

LETTER XXII.

U. C. 292 APPIUS having made away with himſelf in the manner already mentioned, and war having ceaſed between the Romans and the Volſcians, the people were for ſome time quiet. But no ſooner were theſe wars, or rather ſkirmiſhes, over, than the tribunes began to ſhew their authority, and ſo great was their inſolence, that they inſiſted upon the people being intruſted with a part of the legiſlative authority, and propoſed that a body of laws ſhould be compiled, wherein the reſpective bounds of each party ſhould be comprehended. This occaſioned the moſt violent diſputes in the ſenate, between the patricians and the tribunes of the people; and Cæſo, the ſon of Quintus Cincinnatus, drove the clamorous multitude out of the forum,

forum, treating them at the ſame time with every mark of indignity.

The conduct of this young patrician ſo exaſperated the people, that the tribunes reſolved to bring him to public juſtice, and therefore gave him notice that a day was fixed upon for him to make his defence. His father was equally reproached by both parties, and the haughty ſon was admitted to bail, from which he fled, and his father, being a man of the greateſt integrity, took the whole penalty upon himſelf. He ſold all his eſtates except one ſmall farm, which lay on the other ſide of the Tiber, to which he retired, and cultivated it in the moſt frugal manner, in order to procure a ſubſiſtence for his family, while his ſon, who was declared an enemy to the commonwealth, took ſhelter from the revenge of his incenſed countrymen among the Ætruria.

In the mean time the clamours of the people continued to increaſe more than ever againſt the ſenators for not putting in force the Agrarian law, and it was inſinuated by the tribunes, that a deſign had been formed, in order to deprive them of their privileges, and make them ſlaves to the patricians. By theſe means they thought to have intimidated the ſenate, and brought them into a compliance with all their deſigns; but ſtill they found it impracticable, for the people continued ſtill more clamorous than before, while the patricians remained inflexible, and lent a deaf ear to all their intreaties. During the continuance of theſe inteſtine diviſions among the citizens, Herdonius, a Sabine, a man of an enterprizing ſpirit, took up arms, in order to ſurprize Rome, while the people were ſo much engaged in their own popular diſputes, that they had totally forgotten what was

their

their duty to each other as members of the ſame collective body in a political capacity.

This Herdonius was a man of great power, and he had abilities fit for conducting any enterprize whatever. His tenants and dependants were ſo numerous, that he was able to raiſe an army of four thouſand men, whom he ſent down the Tiber in boats during the night, and next morning the Romans were not a little ſurprized to ſee a foreign enemy in poſſeſſion of the capitol, as well as ſome other important places in Rome.

Herdonius, like an able politician, did all he could to perſuade the ſlaves and the lower orders of the people, to join his ſtandard; but the tribunes, notwithſtanding their inveterate hatred to the patricians, yet could not bear the thoughts of becoming enemies to their country. Application was made to the conſuls, and they promiſed that ten men ſhould be made choice of by the people, and authorized with plenary powers to make laws binding upon the whole community. Valerius, one of the conſuls, took upon himſelf the direction of public affairs, and marching at the head of as many of the people as would follow him, he called out that all thoſe who had the intereſt of their country at heart, ſhould now ſhew their courage, by taking up arms in its defence. A moſt dreadful engagement enſued, in which the conſul was ſlain, and Herdonius laid violent hands upon himſelf, while his followers were either ſlain or made ſlaves.

This victory over the Sabines did not, however, reſtore peace to the city, for the Agrarian law was what the ſenate could not think of complying with for this reaſon, that it would have in a conſiderable manner affected their temporal circumſtances. The tribunes applied to the ſurviving conſul, but as he had

had no intention of complying with their requeſts, he told them that he was but one, and therefore he could not give them an anſwer till ſuch time as a colleague was appointed to act in conſort with him. It was therefore reſolved upon, that an aſſembly of the people ſhould be called, in order to make choice of a new conſul, and the election fell upon Quintius Cincinnatus, the father of Cæſo, who had been proſecuted as an enemy to his country. This worthy Roman had become ſo dead to all thoughts of riſing to an honorary employment under the government, that when the deputies, who were appointed to give him notice of his new dignity, arrived at his farm, they found him holding the plough in the character of a huſbandman. He did not ſeem in the leaſt ambitious of the honour that had been beſtowed upon him, but looking back to the fields, where he had long enjoyed rural pleaſures, he came to his wife and ſaid, "Ah, my dear, I muſt leave my beloved retire-"ment, and I am afraid theſe fields will not be cul-"tivated in a proper manner during this ſeaſon, "unleſs I ſhall return to give my men ſuch di-"rections as are neceſſary for the regulation of their "conduct."

Having taken an affectionate farewel of his wife, he ſet out for Rome, where he found two contending parties ready to devour each other; but prudence induced him to take part with neither, being reſolved to diſcharge the duty of his office, without ſeeking for popular applauſe on the one hand, nor incurring popular diſpleaſure on the other. He was well acquainted with all the ſprings of action in the human heart, and therefore while he treated the tribunes with a reſpect becoming their dignity, as the repreſentatives of the people, he at the ſame time

chaſtiſed

chaſtiſed their inſolence, by pointing out to them the bounds of their duty, and the extent of their privileges. Upon the whole, his conduct was ſuch, that it gave the utmoſt ſatisfaction to both the contending parties; for he knew how to temper the rigour of the laws with equitable moderation; and the power of the ſtern magiſtrate on the bench was forgotten, when the ſeverity of his decrees were related by ſentiments of mercy, which can only take place in great minds. Having conducted the affairs of the republic in this equitable manner one year, and brought the contending parties to a ſort of agreement, he reſigned the enſigns of his office, and once more went to enjoy his beloved retirement, in the cultivation of that farm, from which he had been called by the unanimous ſuffrages of the people.

The value or worth of a good magiſtrate is ſeldom known till ſuch as ſucceeds them act inconſiſtent with that duty they owe to the community.

U. C. 295 Many have taken upon themſelves the reins of government, and promiſed to diſcharge every duty to the public, while at the ſame time they knew that they were no way qualified for ſuch undertakings; and the event convinced the people that the aſſertion now made uſe of is true.

Cincinnatus had acted as a conſul among the Roman people with ſuch moderation, honeſty, and integrity, that he deſerved the applauſe of all the people, and it was not long before they were once more obliged to ſolicit him to leave that ſtate of retirement which ſeemed more happy to him than all the employments of offices, or the marks by which regal dignity is held up to the populace as an object of adulation.

The Volſcii and the Æquii, although defeated in all the engagements in which they had been concerned,

cerned, yet were ſo reſtleſs in their diſpoſition, that they reſolved to renew the war, and commence hoſtilities againſt the Roman people. Minutius, one of the conſuls, was ſent at the head of an army to oppoſe them, but being of a cowardly diſpoſition, and utterly unacquainted with the military art, he retreated at the firſt approach of the enemy, and ſuffered the Romans to be incloſed within a defile between two mountains, from whence there was no probability of their being able to make a retreat. Inevitable deſtruction now ſeemed impending on the Roman army; for the conſul neither knew how to advance or retreat; while ſome horſemen, endowed with more courage than the reſt of the ſoldiers, made their way through the camp of the enemy, and conveyed the diſmal news to the ſenate at Rome.

The ſenate, as well as the people, were ſtruck with conſternation; and as the other conſul could not be truſted in an affair of ſo much importance, it was agreed upon, that Quintus Cincinnatus ſhould be once more ſent for, as the only perſon properly qualified to take upon him the direction of public affairs; and it was at the ſame time reſolved upon, that he ſhould be made dictator. The meſſengers who were ſent to invite him, found him in the ſame manner as before; and when they preſented to him the enſigns of his office, he ſhuddered back at the thought, and declared that he was ſo happy in the management of his farm, that he did not deſire a change, nor could any thing but the love of his country bring him from it.

That ſimplicity of manners which had ſo ſtrongly marked every part of his conduct, ſtill ſeemed to be his predominant principle; for no ſooner had the meſſengers inveſted him with the enſigns of office, than he made choice of Tarquilius, a poor labouring

man, to be the general of his horſe, becauſe he was convinced of his ſkill in military affairs, and could confide in his fidelity in reſpect to the diſcharging the duty incumbent upon him.

The parents of Tarquilius had lived in the moſt opulent circumſtances, but his father having been involved in debt he was left an orphan, and had hitherto acted only as a private ſoldier during the wars, and as a huſbandman in time of peace.

As ſoon as the dictator entered the city, he ſummoned all thoſe who were willing to bear arms, to appear the ſame evening in the Campus Martius, and at the ſame time bring along with them proper arms and accoutrements, with proviſions to ſerve them five days. This was a moſt ſpirited reſolution, and it is impoſſible to expreſs with what alacrity the people obeyed the orders of a man, in whom they could place the utmoſt confidence. This ſhould teach magiſtrates to ſtudy the inclinations of the people, who are the fountain of power, and ſeek nothing further as a reward for their ſervices, than the public approbation.

When he arrived near the camp, he ordered the men to make as much noiſe as poſſible by ſhouts and acclamations, that the conſuls might be apprized of their arrival, ſo as to revive the drooping ſpirits of the army. This was an unexpected ſtroke to the enemy, who thought themſelves ſecure of victory, but they were ſtill more perplexed when they found that Cincinnatus had taken them in flank, and thrown up an entrenchment between them, in order to prevent them from making their eſcape.

A bloody battle enſued, but the Volſci finding themſelves altogether unable to oppoſe the Romans, or even defend themſelves, were obliged to

to ſue for peace; and a ceſſation of arms was agreed upon. They gave the dictator leave to preſcribe what conditions they were to comply with, and he, in order to make the Roman power appear as formidable as poſſible, made all the officers priſoners of war, and obliged all the common ſoldiers to paſs under the yoke. That is, they were obliged to paſs under a gallows with two ſpears extended upon it, as a token of their having forfeited their lives, and become obnoxious to public puniſhment. This was undoubtedly the moſt abject ſtate to which he could reduce them, and their conduct in ſubmitting to ſuch conditions is a proof that they had no regard for that ſpirit of public liberty that muſt at all times keep the ſtate from corruption, and make men real patriots, though they may not be denominated by that appellation by the unthinking populace.

All the plunder taken from the enemy he ordered to be diſtributed among his men, nor did he ſo much as appropriate one part of it to himſelf. In every other part of his conduct he acted in the moſt diſintereſted manner, and having ſubdued the enemies of the commonwealth, and made the city much more flouriſhing than it was when he entered upon office, he reſigned the dictatorſhip after he had only enjoyed it two months. So much can ſome great men do in a little time. The ſenate intended to have heaped honours upon him, but he rather choſe to return to his farm, in order to ſpend the remainder of his days in retirement, without any connection with the buſy world.

A. C. 296. The Æquii who could not bear the thoughts of being ſubject to the Romans, took the field as ſoon as the ſeaſon of the year would permit, and forcing the auxiliaries

out of their own city, once more entered it in triumph. This was apparently a fatal ſtroke to the Romans, for theſe inteſtine diviſions were not yet healed, and when the levies were to be made, the tribunes would not ſuffer the people to be inrolled. Every thing was now in a ſtate of confuſion, and as the ſenators had moſt to loſe, ſo they reſolved to raiſe all their dependants, and put themſelves at their head in order to ſupport the public cauſe. This was certainly a very political meaſure, for no ſooner did the people ſee the aged ſenators going in a body againſt the common enemy, than the love of their country got the better of all particular prejudices, and they conſented to inliſt upon conditions that their tribunes ſhould from five be increaſed to the number of ten.

Great oppoſition was made in the ſenate to this meaſure, becauſe moſt of the patricians looked upon it as only a handle made uſe of by the people, in order to encroach upon the civil power. They could not conceive how their own dignity could be ſupported, while any conceſſions in favour of liberty were made to the people, and, like all corrupt miniſters, they ſet up a claim to power, inconſiſtent with the rights of the community.

While the ſenate were deliberating in this manner on the moſt ſalutary methods to be uſed in order to ſupport the peace of the city, without giving the people an unlimited authority, Cincinnatus, who from the whole of his conduct ſeems to have acted conſiſtent with the duty of an upright magiſtrate, told them, that nothing could ſo much eſtabliſh their own power, as that of granting the people the liberty of chuſing ten tribunes. He obſerved, that while they had only a few, they were generally unanimous in their opinions, but could the number

number be encreaſed to ten, one would, by his diſſenting vote, direct the whole of the proceedings, and one out of ten might be eaſily brought over, in order to give countenance to a favourite ſcheme, whenever it ſhould happen to be propoſed to the ſenate. The ſenate coincided with his propoſal, and in order to make the people as much contented as poſſible, they were told that their requeſt ſhould be complied with, and the number of tribunes encreaſed to ten.

The Roman people now began to look upon all their grievances as redreſſed; but the very perſons whom they had made choice of to be the guardians of their liberty, acted in ſuch a domineering manner, that no honeſt man could place confidence in them. The people inſiſted that their tribunes ſhould ſummon a public aſſembly in the forum, in order to paſs an act, in which every one ſhould be intitled to the privilege of building houſes on the Aventine Hills, which at that time were altogether unoccupied. The ſenate were perplexed, but they thought it much better to comply with their requeſt, than have the Agrarian law revived, which they had no intention of complying with; but this did not anſwer the end propoſed; for new complaints were conſtantly exhibited, and demands made of ſuch a nature, that none could comply with them, who had the leaſt regard to the dignity of government.

From this you may learn that there is a line of duty preſcribed for the conduct of the governed and the governors. Let tyrants encroach on the rights of the people, and they know not when to ſtop, till they have made them the moſt abject ſlaves; and on the other hand,

let the people make demands of an unneceſſary nature, and theſe demands are complied with, they will ſtill proceed further, till they have trampled upon every civil inſtitution.

LETTER XXIII.

THE power of the tribunes now became an object of ridicule, in conſequence of their inſolence, for they even went ſo far as to ſummons the conſuls to appear before the people, and anſwer to every thing that ſhould be objected againſt them, with reſpect to their infringement of the Agrarian Law.

On the day appointed for the diſcuſſion of this important affair, many of the people gathered together, and long debates enſued between thoſe who ſought to ſupport the patricians on the one hand, and the friends of liberty on the other. The ſenators and conſuls argued that no government could exiſt where the laws were not vigorouſly executed. And on the other hand the tribunes of the people inſiſted that what they claimed was conſtitutional, and therefore their demands ought to be complied with.

The people began to be extremely clamorous, and inſiſted for the Agrarian Law being executed in its full force, while the ſenators and conſuls ſtill remained inflexible. While they were deliberating in this manner with equal heat on both ſides, Siccinus Denatus, an old ſoldier, entered the forum, and addreſſing himſelf to the tribunes, told them how many battles he had fought in defence of the commonwealth, and yet for all that he was left to ſtarve while ſinking under the decays of nature, and

and without a friend to adminiſter him the leaſt comfort, at a time when he ſtood moſt in need of it.

The lands that had been by his valour taken from the common enemy were diſtributed among the patricians, who had never ſuſtained any of the fatigues of war, and they refuſed to grant him ſo much out of them as would procure a ſcanty ſubſiſtence.

No ſooner had he done ſpeaking, than the people, filled with indignation that ſo much merit ſhould go unrewarded, inſiſted that the law ſhould be put in full force, and an equitable diſtribution be made of the lands. Some of the ſenators made attempts to ſpeak, but all was in vain, for the people, in one voice, called out for a redreſs of their grievances, without paying any regard to the dignified order of magiſtracy.

The younger patricians, who looked upon the demands of the people as altogether inconſiſtent with the dignity of government, ruſhed out among the multitude, and with their ſwords drawn, put them all to flight, declaring that they would ſooner loſe their lives than comply with their requeſts.

The tribunes of the people could not look upon this act of indignity in any other light than as merely the higheſt degree of inſolence, and therefore they inſiſted that the young patricians ſhould be tried, in order to deter others from committing the like practices for the future; but ſtill the grievances of the people were not redreſſed, for the patricians ſeemed to reign triumphant.

There is nothing contributes ſo much towards healing inteſtine diviſions in public communities as the fear of a foreign invaſion, and while the Romans were diſputing concerning the power of the patri-

cians on the one hand, and the liberties of the people on the other, news was brought them that the Æquii were marching in a full body to attack the city.

It was the duty of the conſul to head the army againſt the invaders, and along with him, in his train, he took Siccinus Denatus, who, by his ſpirited harangues, had ſo much ingratiated himſelf into the favour and graces of the people. He was bribed by the conſul, and therefore, in order to prevent him from making any remonſtrances againſt the grievances which the people complained of, he was ſent by the conſul to attack the enemy at a place where there was not the leaſt reaſon to ſuppoſe but he would be killed along with all thoſe under his command. His courage, however, ſupported him under the greateſt dangers; for although he had no more than eight hundred men under his command, yet they had been ſo long accuſtomed to war, that they were willing to undergo any difficulties rather than deſert his ſtandard. He attacked the enemy at a part of the camp, where they had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of any aſſault being made, and by his conduct and courage alone, the Romans obtained a complete victory, and triumphed over their enemies, whom they defeated with great ſlaughter.

Siccinus Denatus, who had done ſo much ſervice to the commonwealth, knew the malice of the conſul to be inveterate; and at the ſame time he was convinced that he would not have been ſent on ſo dangerous an expedition, had it not been in hopes of his being defeated. He therefore reſolved to aſſert his own importance, and for that reaſon, when the conſuls returned from the army to the city, he inſiſted that no triumph ſhould be allowed them.

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This was ſuch a popular ſtroke, that all the people looked upon him as the guardian of their privileges, and one whom the gods had raiſed up to defend them from the arbitrary power of the ſenate, as well as from the mercileſs demands of the patricians. Thus the ſtruggle between the governors and the people came to ſuch an height, that while the latter began to know the nature of their own importance, and that ſhadow of ſovereignty which the ſenate had claimed, began to dwindle down to nothing.

From this you may learn, that nothing can ſet aſide natural claims, nor can governors continue long in oppreſſing the people. Tyrants may for ſome time exerciſe a coercive authority over free-born ſubjects; but they cannot expect to do it any longer than the people begin to know what right they have to act conſiſtent with the rules of civil ſociety, and at the ſame time be trampled upon by thoſe to whom they have delegated an authority to govern them conſiſtent with the laws of the community to which they belong, as members who wanted to diſcharge every duty incumbent upon them.

A. C. 202. The diſputes concerning the Agrarian law ſeemed to have for ſome time ſubſided; for the violence of the contending parties on each hand had been carried on with ſuch heat, that all thoſe who had the leaſt regard to the ſafety of the civil community, wanted to ſee an end put to them, and peace reſtored to the city.

To bring about ſo valuable a ſcheme, ſo as to conciliate the affections of all ranks of people, and make every one acquainted with a fixed rule of duty, it was propoſed that the laws ſhould be all reduced to writing, ſo that every perſon ſhould know in

what manner they were to act. The ſenate agreed to this propoſal, as the only method that could be uſed to heal the differences between them and the people; for they deſired that the bounds of their power ſhould be marked out in the ſame manner as thoſe of the plebians, who in all ſtates are the moſt numerous.

It was therefore propoſed in the ſenate, and approved of by the people, that deputies from the republic ſhould be ſent to Greece, in order to bring over ſome copies of thoſe laws that had been framed for the uſe of Athens, and the other ſtates of that country, who were then the moſt famous in the world. Famous, whether we conſider them as the encouragers of learning, or the guardians of thoſe civil rights of the people, to which every man is undoubtedly entitled to, by that part he bears in ſociety as an individual.

Manlius Sulpicius, and Poſthumius, were the perſons made choice of by the Roman people to go upon this important expedition, and they were ſent out in gallies conſiſtent with the dignity that the people of Rome began then to take upon them; for although little better than barbarians, yet they looked upon themſelves as ſuperior to all others. In this manner they ſet ſail from the Tiber, and undoubtedly it was the duty of the ſenate, as well as the people to make their repreſentatives as reſpectable as poſſible, while they were going upon a foreign embaſſy to the moſt polite people in the world; for had they done otherwiſe, they would have brought their republic into diſgrace, while they were growing up to a ſtate of maturity.

While they were abſent from Rome, a moſt dreadful plague happened in the city, which daily carried off vaſt numbers of the people, ſo that upon their

their returning, all parties were quite aboliſhed; for the public calamity had reconciled thoſe together as friends, who before were enemies.

When the three ambaſſadors arrived, they produced the copies of the laws which they had taken from the Athenian archieves, and they were digeſted into ten rules or tables; but two more were afterwards added, by the unanimous conſent of the ſenate and people; ſo that theſe municipal laws were called the laws of the twelve tables. They were in their own nature ſimple, and ſuited to the manners of the people in that age, and many fragments of them are ſtill to be met with in the writings of Civilians.

The laws being preſented to the ſenate and to the people, the latter inſiſted that ſome of their own body ſhould be made choice of, to reduce them into a ſyſtem, ſo that the executive part ſhould be complied with in the moſt rigorous manner.

This occaſioned ſuch a number of debates, that it is neceſſary to attend to the proceedings of the Romans in the cloſeſt manner. Ten of the principal ſenators were made choice of, whoſe power was to laſt for one year, and no appeal was to lay from whatever they determined.

Poſthumus, Manlius, and Sulpicius, who had been ſent as ambaſſadors to Greece, were the three firſt choſen, and to them were added, Appius, Genutius, Sextus, Romulus, Julius, Veturius, and Heratius, men held in the utmoſt eſtimation by the people, and who had large poſſeſſions in the Roman territories.

Theſe ten perſons having the abſolute power of the government reſted in their hands, reſolved that each ſhould act one ſingle day, and then be ſucceeded by the other. That no diſputes might take place

place among them, but that each ſhould have that honour beſtowed upon him that was conſiſtent with the duty of his ſtation, it was agreed upon that the perſon in office for the day ſhould be attended with all the enſigns of power, while the other ſhould only be honoured in ſuch a manner as to diſtinguiſh them from the vulgar, and convince the populace that they had a right to reſpect, becauſe they would act in their turn.

Here we find, in conſequence of the ſtruggle between the people and the patricians, Rome once more aſſumed a new form of government. For ſome time theſe magiſtrates acted as if they had nothing but the intereſt of the commonwealth at heart, and that the people might be made fully acquainted with the code of laws that had been brought from Greece, they got a ſtranger, a native of Epheſus, to interpret them to them.

Induſtry, however, ſurmounts all difficulties; for by the aſſiduous attendance of the people to what was ſaid to them by the interpreter, they ſoon comprehended the nature of thoſe laws that were to be the rule of their duty as members of the community; and as ſoon as they could read them, they were engraven on plates of braſs, and hung up in the forum.

This was a moſt excellent regulation, becauſe by it the people were not left in a ſtate of uncertainty concerning the extent of thoſe obligations they were under to the civil power; for the line of duty was marked out in ſuch a manner, that they could not be deceived. Such indeed ſhould be the duty of all legiſlators; for no man, conſiſtent with the dictates of natural religion, ought to be judged by a law that has never been promulgated to him; nor can he be looked upon as criminal, unleſs a publication, with

with ſome pains and penalties affixed to it, has firſt been made public, in order to puniſh him.

Every thing being ſettled to the ſatisfaction of all parties, it was thought the decemviri would have reſigned their employments; but the love of power is of too intoxicating a nature to be eaſily given up. Theſe magiſtrates found that by their encroachments on the rights of the ſenate and patricians, they had engroſſed to themſelves almoſt the whole legiſlative as well as the executive power, ſo that they were unwilling to become ſubject to thoſe whoſe privileges they had in a conſiderable manner abridged.

They told the people that there was an abſolute neceſſity for ſome more laws being added to thoſe brought from Greece, in order to eſtabliſh the liberties of the people, and the citizens, in compliance with their requeſt, were unanimous in their reſolution of continuing them ſome time longer in office. It is remarkable, that ſome perſons can acquire popularity, even under a pretence of deſpiſing it; and many have riſen to power, as well as grandeur, by a well-affected indifference for what they moſt wiſhed for. Sincerity, however, is the foundation of real patriotiſm; for no man can be ſuppoſed capable of acting for the intereſt of his country, conſiſtent with the duty he owes to his conſtituents, while he knows he procured their votes by indirect means.

Appius pretended that he was not able to diſcharge the duties of his office, and therefore deſired the people to look out for ſome perſon properly qualified to ſucceed him, as he was determined to reſign, and retire to a private ſtation. But while he was pretending to ſo much diſintereſtedneſs, he was in a private manner making ſure of his election,

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by bringing over to his party as many of the citizens as he could corrupt.

This was ſuch a ſtroke of policy, that it ſurprized every thinking man among the Roman people, eſpecially when on the day of election his name ſtood firſt in the liſt of the candidates, and a great number of the populace ſtood up in his favour. He at the ſame time contrived means to get ſome of the plebians, who were moſt attached to his intereſt, elected to ſerve along with him, in order to have them wholly under his own direction, all which was tranſacted under the name of patriotiſm or popularity.

From this you may learn in what manner government is generally conducted, and how eaſily the lower claſs of people are impoſed upon. Theſe decemviri pretended to the moſt diſintereſtedneſs of mind, and the greateſt integrity of conduct, and yet we find them as fond of coveting popular applauſe as ever tyrants were to eſtabliſh a pretended prerogative upon the ruin of the rights of their own natural ſubjects.

The election being over, and Appius reinſtated in the poſſeſſion of that authority he ſo much deſired, reſolved, if poſſible, to make it perpetual, ſo that no revolution for the future ſhould ſet it aſide. All thoſe connected with him were creatures whom he had raiſed to power, in order to be ſubſervient to his views, and he doubted not of bringing them over, to give a ſanction to all his ſchemes. They were too docile, and under too many obligations to Appius, to diſpute his orders, and therefore, in the moſt ſolemn manner, they bound themſelves not to do any thing without his approbation and concurrence. Here we find a popular encroachment upon the power of the ſenate that ſeemed to threaten the deſtruction

ſtruction of the commonwealth. The decemviri no longer acted in the moderate manner they had done; for inſtead of one of them, as uſual, being attended with the lictors, each claimed that privilege; nor did any of them ever appear in public, but with all the enſigns of regal dignity, that uſed to be aſſumed by the Roman kings before the expulſion of Tarquin. The eyes of the people were now opened, and they found that inſtead of men properly qualified to diſcharge the duties of magiſtrates, they had given up their power into the hands of villains, who, under the proſtituted name of law, exerciſed the moſt horrid acts of injuſtice, without regard to any moral obligations.

The vileſt wretches were made uſe of to give information againſt all ſuch as were obnoxious to the dæmagogues of the people, and ſuch as obtained any redreſs of their grievances were obliged to purchaſe it at the expence of truth and honeſty, namely, by giving bribes to the judges. Every perſon who had the leaſt regard for the proſperity of Rome, looked upon their city as given up to deſtruction, but that they might not bear witneſs of the miſeries that ſeemed impending, they retired and diſperſed themſelves among the neighbouring ſtates.

In the mean time the decemviri finding that they had proceeded too far in their deſpotic actions, began to think of ſome means whereby they could regain the affections of the people which they had in a great meaſure loſt. To effectuate ſo valuable a purpoſe, and make themſelves ſtill more arbitrary than before, they ordered that two new tables of laws ſhould be added to thoſe already agreed upon by the ſenate, and theſe were called the laws of the twelve tables. This they conſidered as a maſterſtroke of policy; for it was ordained that none of the

patricians and plebians ſhould join their children together in marriage, from whence we may learn that their ſole intention was to widen the breach between the contending parties.

The people, however, were not ſuch fools but that they ſaw through their deſigns, although they reſolved to conceal their reſentment for ſome time, becauſe they knew they would ſoon have an opportunity of chuſing others in their room. Stupid, indeed, are thoſe who think to ſupport themſelves in power, by trampling on the rights of the people, and abuſing the authority with which they are intruſted.

In this, however, the people were deceived; for no ſooner did the time of election arrive, than the decemviri, in the moſt arbitrary manner, voted themſelves into a ſtanding body for one year longer, although it was contrary to the law, and both the ſenate and the people had remonſtrated againſt it. The people looked upon themſelves as utterly impoſed upon by thoſe whom they had made their maſters, and the city was almoſt deſerted of its inhabitants. The decemviri acted in ſo arbitrary a manner, that they ſeemed to mind nothing further than that of looking out for new objects upon whom they might exerciſe their cruelty. The martial ſpirit of the Romans ſeemed, during this time, to have ſubſided, for not one of the citizens had courage to take up arms in defence of their juſt rights and privileges, which they had nobly acquired in the field of battle.

Their uſurped authority was ſupported not only by the lictors, who on every occaſion uſed to attend the magiſtrate, for all their clients were obliged to be ſubſervient to them, and even many of the patricians were brought over to their party, regardleſs

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of the duty they owed to their country. Thus you ſee, my dear Frederick, how the moſt worthleſs wretches can abuſe power under a pretence of ſupporting the rights of the people; for there have been mock-patriots in all ages, who never paid any regard to the rights of the people, further than their own intereſt could be promoted.

This is a moſt melancholy conſideration, but it is too true to be denied, for the accounts of all nations make it evident, even to the moſt ignorant who have never inquired into theſe things, whether they were right or wrong. The abuſed power of corrupt magiſtrates indicates the downfal of the ſtate, and of this we ſhall have occaſion to take particular notice in the ſubſequent part of this work. The people may for ſome time be deceived, and for ſome time may be injured; but at laſt their indignation will return upon the heads of their oppreſſors with redoubled fury.

LETTER XXIV.

WHILE the Romans were tearing each other in pieces by their inteſtine diviſions, the Volſcii and Æquii embraced as favourable an opportunity of invading their territories. They had got within ſix miles of Rome, before the people ſo much as knew of their having taken up arms; and as the decemviri could not raiſe an army without the authority of the ſenate, ſo they were obliged to apply to them, notwithſtanding the haughty manner in which they had acted to them before.

The exigence of the ſtate required that the ſenate ſhould be called, after a receſs of ſome months; and when they met, Appius, who ſtill acted at the head

head of the decemviri, addreſſed himſelf to them in a formal ſpeech, deſiring their opinion in what manner they were to proceed in a buſineſs of ſo important a nature.

When he had done ſpeaking, Valerius, the grandſon of Poplicola, roſe up in order to deliver his ſentiments; but Appius, in the moſt arbitrary manner, commanded him to ſit down till it came to his turn; for it ſeems ſome of the oldeſt had not yet ſpoken.

The inſolence of Appius was ſo great, that it enraged the whole body of the ſenate, who told him that he and the other decemviri had laid a plan to inſlave the people, by ſetting themſelves above the laws. Marcus Horatius, in a moſt excellent ſpeech, obſerved, that under the bare-faced pretence of ſerving their fellow-citizens, they had committed an innumerable ſeries of crimes and cruelty, maltreated many perſons with no other view but that of ſeizing upon their eſtates, and making themſelves rich at the expence of the beſt families in Rome.

Appius, who had long acted the part of the moſt arbitrary tyrant, endeavoured to conceal his reſentment, and he did ſo for ſome time, but at laſt his paſſion got the better of his reſolution, and after pouring out a load of abuſe upon the ſenators, he threatened to have Horatius thrown headlong from the Tarpeian rock, and there daſhed to pieces. This inraged the ſenate to ſuch a degree, that Appius began to repent of his temerity, and told them that he was willing to hear debates carried on in a proper manner, but could not conſent to hear any oration made that would tend towards inflaming the minds of the people.

He added further, that thoſe who were joined with him had been endowed with plenary powers from

from the people, to ſee that a body of laws ſhould be properly compiled, and then they were to give an account of their conduct, and be judged by thoſe who had appointed them to act. This was a ſpecious pretence to draw a veil over their iniquitous proceedings, and to promote their meaſures in the moſt effectual manner. Appius took care to bring over to his intereſt a large body of the ſenate, who were frightened on account of the power of the people.

Claudius, the uncle of Appius, ſpoke of the conduct of the decemviri in ſuch a manner, as inflamed the minds of many of the ſenators, but by a majority of votes, it was at laſt declared that the decemviri ſhould have power to levy forces, and lead them againſt the common enemy.

Having ſucceeded ſo far, they raiſed an army, which was divided into three ſeparate bodies, one of which was left under the command of Appius himſelf, to take care of the city, or rather to prevent the people from riſing up in arms againſt thoſe who had ſo cruelly oppreſſed them.

The two other bodies were commanded by the reſt of the decemviri, but the ſoldiers had not confidence in their generals. They knew that the whole diſgrace of a defeat would be imputed to their commanders, and therefore, as ſoon as the enemy approached, they abandoned the camp, and fled in the utmoſt diſorder. When the news arrived that the army was defeated, the Romans received it with as much pleaſure as if a nation had been ſubdued, or a city taken.

Some of the people inſiſted that the generals ſhould be diſcharged and diſgraced, while others cried out that nothing was ſo neceſſary as to have a dictator acquainted with the military art, to conduct

duct the army, and ſupport the dignity of the commonwealth. While they were deliberating, in this manner, without coming to any concluſion whatever, Sicinus Denatus ſtood up, and ſpoke of the conduct of the generals in the moſt contemptible light. He pointed out their faults in ſuch a manner as he thought would influence the paſſions of the people, and took care to aggravate every circumſtance.

On the other hand Appius did not loſe ſight of his favourite object, namely, that of making himſelf the ſovereign arbitrary tyrant over the ſtate. He propoſed that Denatus ſhould be ſent to command the army as legate, which office was then held ſacred among the Romans; for the perſon who enjoyed it was both the high-prieſt in all religious matters, and at the ſame time general of the army.

Denatus, who was a man of great integrity, had no ſuſpicion of any deſign having been formed againſt him, and therefore it was with the utmoſt pleaſure that he marched to the army, in order to take upon him the command of the forces. When he came there, it was propoſed that he ſhould go at the head of one hundred men, in order to look out for a place to encamp in. This was a ſcheme laid by his enemies, and the ſoldiers, who were ſent along with him, had been previouſly hired to murder him. Accordingly, they led him into a hollow way, between two mountains, where he was an utter ſtranger, and as they were then out of ſight of the army, they began to execute their horrid deſign.

They attacked him in the rear, and Denatus, who now began to ſee that he was moſt baſely betrayed by his enemies, finding nothing but immediate death

death before him, reſolved, like a brave man, to ſell his life as dear as poſſible. He was far advanced in years; but that courage by which he had been diſtinguiſhed through life, had not yet forſaken him; for placing his back againſt a rock, he killed fifteen of the villains, and wounded thirty more. The undaunted bravery of an innocent man will always make a laſting impreſſion on even the moſt abandoned aſſaſſins, and notwithſtanding their eager deſire to reap the wages of iniquity, yet, heroic virtue often deters them from their intended purpoſe. Denatus, conſcious of his own innocence, and convinced that he had been devoted to deſtruction, acted with ſo much bravery, that the villains were intimidated, and poured in their javelins upon him, many of which he received in his ſhield without ſhewing the leaſt ſigns of fear.

The aſſaſſins looking upon themſelves as incapable of deſtroying the friend of his country with their warlike inſtruments, had recourſe to the meaneſt act of cowardice that ever was recorded in the annals of any nation whatever. Some of them went up to the top of the rock, from whence they threw down great ſtones, by which the aged ſoldier was at laſt deſtroyed, after he had given ſuch proofs of his courage, as will for ever entitle him to the higheſt reſpect.

When the news was brought to Appius, he ſent notice to the other decemviri, that, in order to ſave appearances, they muſt honour him with a public funeral, ſo that they might conciliate the affections of the people; but the diſguiſe was ſeen through by every one of the army, and thoſe who acted in ſo hypocritical a manner became greater objects of deteſtation than even their worſt actions had made them before.

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The people were now enraged to the higheſt degree, and every day it was expected that they would have taken up arms againſt thoſe, who, under pretence of being the guardians of the laws, had actually trampled upon every civil inſtitution. One crime is generally followed by another, and it commonly happens, that thoſe who trample on one moral obligation, ſeldom pay any regard to the others. Vice is of a progreſſive nature, and thoſe who are its votaries ſeldom know when or where to ſtop.

Soon after the aſſaſſination of Denatus, Appius, who ſeemed to have engroſſed to himſelf the whole government of Rome, continued to act in a manner much more arbitrary than had been ever exerciſed even under Tarquin, who was the laſt of the kings. He could ſet no bounds to his ambition, nor could he lay any reſtraint upon his paſſions, ſo that he became a ſlave both to the one and the other, ſo as not to be under the government of reaſon.

One day, while Appius was ſitting in the forum to give judgment in litigated cauſes among the people, he ſaw an aged woman paſs by with a young female under her care, whom ſhe was conducting to one of the public ſchools. She was not above ſixteen years of age, but her beauty was ſo ſtriking, and her form ſo majeſtic, that all his paſſions were on flame for enjoyment. Next day ſhe paſſed by at the ſame time, and the modeſty of her deportment inflamed him ſtill more than ever. As his paſſion for power was in a manner unbounded, ſo were his luſts, and whatever might be the conſequence, he reſolved to enjoy the innocent virgin at the expence of the violation of the moſt ſacred duties binding upon human ſociety. He enquired

quired who ſhe was, and was informed that her name was Virginia, and that ſhe was the daughter of one Virginius, who then acted as a centurion, or the commander of a company in the army that was then engaged in the wars with the Æquii and the Volſcii.

The young woman had been contracted to Icilius who was once a tribune of the people, and to him ſhe was to have been married as ſoon as the war was over. The laws of the twelve tables had, in the ſtricteſt manner, forbidden the marriages of plebians with the daughters of patricians, and therefore Appius found himſelf reduced to a great dilemma concerning the manner in which he ſhould act; for at firſt he had reſolved, to take the virgin to his bed as a wife. He was fully convinced in his own mind, that the letter of the law was againſt his indulging his favourite paſſion, and therefore he was reſolved to do it in a criminal manner. His firſt attempts were made upon the nurſe, but finding that ſhe was too faithful to be corrupted, he made choice of one Claudius, a vile fellow, who had been long his ſervant, and on every occaſion procured him proper objects for the gratification of his luſts, ſo as to ſatiate to all his pleaſures; and this wretch was ſo loſt to every ſenſe of moral obligation, that he paid no regard to the feelings of humanity, ſo as he could pleaſe his maſter, and for his iniquitous ſervices received an adequate recompence from him.

The ſcheme projected by Appius was the moſt diabolical that was ever invented; for Claudius was inſtructed to go into the ſchool where Virginia was, and claim her as his ſlave. Accordingly he went, and would have dragged her away, had it not been for her cries that alarmed the people, and brought

brought them to her aſſiſtance. However, as he ſtill claimed her as his ſlave, ſhe was obliged to ſubmit, and Claudius dragged her to the judgment ſeat of Appius, where he made a formal demand of her, although he knew that all his pretenſions were founded on falſehood. He had the aſſurance to aſſert, that ſhe was the daughter of one of his ſlaves, and therefore inſiſted that ſhe ſhould remain in his houſe till ſuch time as proper witneſſes arrived from the army, who, as he ſaid, would ſupport him in his right. He ſaid, that ſhe had been by fraud taken from him by the wife of Virginius, who was barren, and never had any children, and therefore he had a right, conſiſtent with the privileges of the Roman citizens, to claim her as his own, until ſuch time as the affair ſhould be ſettled in a public court of judicature.

The duplicity of Appius appeared in the moſt conſpicuous manner on this occaſion, for he ſaid that as the reputed father was not preſent, nothing could be done in the affair, and therefore Claudius muſt have his ſlave till ſuch time as the witneſſes arrived from the army.

No ſooner had Appius delivered ſentence in the manner above recited, than the people ſeemed all filled with the utmoſt indignation. The women in particular were the moſt clamorous; for looking upon Virginia as altogether innocent, and the daughter of her reputed father, they aſſembled together in ſuch multitudes, that Claudius was driven from the forum, and obliged to take refuge under the protection of the decemviri, who ſtill acted in the moſt arbitrary manner.

From this ſingle circumſtance you may learn, that although tyrants prevail for ſome time, yet the voice of the people will at laſt over-power all the machinations

machinations of the moſt wretched dictators; but this will be more fully diſcuſſed in my next letter.

LETTER XXV.

WHILE every thing ſeemed to be in a ſtate of confuſion, and nothing leſs than an open inſurrection was dreaded by all thoſe who wiſhed well to the liberties of their country, Appius, rather than endanger his own ſafety, thought it moſt proper to defer giving judgment in ſuch an important affair, pretending that he muſt take ſome time to conſider of it. This, however, was only an excuſe to gain time; for he waited for the arrival of Virginius, who was with the army about twelve miles from Rome, and he doubted not but his ſuffrage would give a ſanction to his own deciſion.

But Virginius was not to be impoſed on in ſuch a bare-faced manner, and therefore Appius ſent orders to the generals to confine him in a place of ſafety, leſt his preſence ſhould cauſe an inſurrection among the people. Virginius, however, had friends in the city, who knew the whole ſcheme laid by Appius, and when the letters were ſent to the generals in the camp, they cauſed them to be intercepted, and at the ſame time tranſmitted to Virginius the whole account of the deſigns that Appius had upon his daughter, and the baſe manner in which he had got her into his power. Indeed, every perſon was filled with indignation againſt one, who, under pretence of ſupporting the liberties of his country, trampled upon the laws, and ſet at defiance all thoſe moral obligations that are the cement of ſociety.

As ſoon as the news was communicated to Virginius, he pretended that he had received an account of one of his relations being ſick at Rome, and therefore deſired the generals to grant him permiſſion to go there only for a few days. His requeſt was complied with, and he haſtened to the city, filled with indignation againſt the wretch who had ſo inhumanly uſed his moſt beloved daughter, who was dearer to him than any thing in the world.

The next day, while Appius was ſitting on the judgment-ſeat in the forum, Virginius appeared before him, with his daughter in his hand, and both exhibited the utmoſt marks of ſorrow. At the ſame time the accuſer Claudius appeared, and claimed the young maiden as his ſlave. He had the aſſurance to aſſert, that ſhe was the daughter of one of his ſlaves, and, notwithſtanding any pity that might ariſe in his mind on account of her tender years, yet he would not do any thing inconſiſtent with public juſtice. When he had done ſpeaking, one of his female ſlaves, whom he had bribed for the purpoſe, made her appearance in the forum, and ſwore that ſhe was the mother of the unhappy Virginia. This, however, was a groſs perjury; but, as it was neceſſary that Virginius ſhould be heard in his turn, he ſpoke to the following import:

"I am here called before this tribunal, to aſſert "the legitimacy of my daughter's birth, and reſcue "her from the hand of lawleſs power. Inſtead of "my wife being barren, ſhe has had many children, "and had I wanted to adopt an heir, it ſhould have "been a boy, and not a girl; but ſtill it is evident "to many citizens, that Virginia is my daughter."

The poor innocent girl ſtood trembling while her father was ſpeaking, and the whole body of people ſeemed

ſeemed to be intereſted in her favour; for her innocence captivated their hearts, while they admired her reſignation and filial duty.

Appius heſitated ſome time, but at laſt ſtanding up, he declared that he was a judge for the people, and therefore he pronounced the young maiden to be the property of Claudius, at the ſame time ordering the lictors to diſperſe the people.

The lictors, having diſperſed the people, were going to ſeize on Virginia, in order to deliver her up to Claudius, and her father ſeemed to give his approbation to the judgment that had been pronounced. He told Appius, that all he deſired was to take his laſt farewel of one whom he had always looked upon as his daughter, and then he would return to his duty in the army. Appius granted his requeſt, upon condition that he ſhould take leave of her in his preſence; upon which the afflicted parent took his dear child in his arms, and embraced her in the moſt tender manner.

The tears ruſhed down the cheeks of the lovely maiden, and the father, unable to conceal his honeſt indignation any longer, ſnatched up a knife, which he plunged into the heart of his daughter, declaring that he would ſooner ſee her periſh in that manner, than be reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery. At the ſame time he pulled out the knife, reeking with the blood, and, ſhewing it to Appius, ſwore by the infernal gods that he would be revenged upon him.

Having uttered theſe words, he ran through the city, calling upon the people to aſſert their juſt rights and privileges, and in the ſame manner he went to the army, in order to inflame the minds of the ſoldiers.

Perhaps you may look upon this act of the brave Virginius as barbarous, but you muſt conſider the time when it was done, and the provocation which the injured father had received.

A lawleſs ruffian had thruſt himſelf into power, and, under the proſtituted name of juſtice, he had trampled upon the moſt ſacred rights of the people. An injured father appears before him, to ſupport the honour and innocence of his only daughter; but no ſooner did he ſee her decreed, in the moſt illegal manner, to be a ſlave, than his indignation aroſe to ſuch a height, that he was not able to ſupport the thoughts of ſo much diſgrace, but immediately put an end to her exiſtence. The action itſelf was not juſtifiable, but ſtill ſome excuſe may be made for the injured parent. He ſaw the laws of his country trampled on by thoſe who pretended to preſerve them inviolate, and he could not ſupport the thoughts of diſgrace. He had brought up his only child with all the care that an indulgent parent could beſtow, but for all that he ſaw her devoted to be an object to ſatisfy the luſt of a lawleſs ruffian. Sinking under the load of his miſery, and ſeeing no hopes of redreſs, he took up a knife, and plunged it into the boſom of her who was dearer to him than any other object in the world, rather than the tyrant ſhould obtain his ends.

When he arrived in the camp, he had the bloody knife in his hand, and having aſked pardon of the gods, he acknowledged that the action was raſh, but imputed the whole to the neceſſity he was under of vindicating the honour of his beloved daughter. He implored the ſoldiers in the moſt earneſt manner to ſupport the liberties of their country, and not give up thoſe privileges which they enjoyed into the hands of ſingle men, who, under pretence of doing

juſtice

juſtice to every individual, would ſet all the laws at defiance, and eſtabliſh an arbitrary power among thoſe who had aſſerted their natural freedom.

The ſoldiers were too well convinced of the truth of what was ſaid by Virginius, to heſitate one moment in declaring in favour of one who had ſuffered ſo much from the power of a villain, who had trampled upon every inſtitution. They all agreed to leave the camp, and, notwithſtanding the perſuaſions made uſe of by their generals, yet they went to the Aventine Hill, where they remained till they were joined by ſeveral of thoſe who formed the army againſt the Sabines.

In the mean time, Appius did all in his power to quell the inſurrections that began to riſe in the city, and at the ſame time endeavoured to ingratiate himſelf with Valerius and Horatius, who at that time were the greateſt favourites of the people. He applied to Oppius, who was one of his colleagues, to call an aſſembly of the ſenate, which was done, and in it he agreed, that all thoſe who had deſerted from the enemy, or taken part with the deſerters, ſhould be puniſhed in the moſt exemplary manner.

The ſenate, having conſidered the nature of the propoſal laid before them, rejected it with the utmoſt contempt, becauſe they knew, that, had they complied with it, they would have brought upon themſelves the whole vengeance of the ſoldiers, who were already in arms, and determined to ſupport the rights of their fellow-citizens. The whole body of the people approved of the conduct of the ſenate, and no ſooner was the decree made known, than meſſengers were diſpatched to thoſe who had revolted, inviting them to return to Rome, promiſing, at the ſame time, that the antient form of govern-

ment ſhould be reſtored, and all their grievances redreſſed.

The ſoldiers returned to the city in great triumph, being honoured by all ranks of people in the whole republic, except thoſe whoſe intereſt it was to keep them in a ſtate of oppreſſion, and, in conſequence thereof, the decemviri ended, after it had continued ſomewhat more than three years, and in that time had trampled upon all the rights of the people.

It is in a manner impoſſible to expreſs all that the Roman people ſuffered by thoſe men who pretended to be the guardians of their liberty, and the diſpenſers of juſtice to every individual; for no ſooner were they inveſted with plenary powers from the people, than they ſet themſelves up as abſolute tyrants, who were not to be under any manner of controul. They were the worſt of tyrants, becauſe under the ſacred name of liberty they indulged themſelves in the commiſſion of any vice, and made the people ſlaves, while they pretended to be advocates for their freedom.

The Romans, having thus ſhaken off a yoke of ſlavery, which they by their own imprudence had impoſed upon themſelves, began to think of aſſerting their former importance, and for that reaſon made choice of Horatius and Valerius to be their conſuls during the remainder of the year, and at the ſame time elected Virginius, the injured centurion, with Icilius, to be among the number of their tribunes.

Theſe things being properly ſettled, it was next reſolved upon in what manner the decemviri ſhould be puniſhed, who had ſo much abuſed the truſt repoſed in them. A day was fixed for Appius to make his appearance, in order to hear the charges that

that were to be exhibited againſt him, and to give in his anſwer to them. At the ſame time, Oppius, one of his colleagues, had the ſame charge exhibited againſt him, but, as they were both conſcious of their guilt, and knowing that they could expect no mercy, either from the people or the judges, they laid violent hands on themſelves, and in that manner ended their lives, after they had done every thing in their power to oppreſs their fellow-citizens. The other eight of the decemviri, knowing that they were obnoxious to the people, and that they would be brought to an account for their conduct, left the city, and went into exile, while Claudius, who had pretended to be the maſter of the lovely Virginia, was obliged to abandon Rome, in order to eſcape from the fury of the populace, who, in conſequence of his perfidy, were ready to wreak their vengeance upon him, had he not taken the methods above-mentioned, in order to avoid their fury.

From this you may learn, that nothing is more to be dreaded than the anger of an incenſed people, when they imagine that thoſe who are intruſted with the ſovereign authority trample upon their rights and privileges; nor is it known how far the reſentment of the Romans might have been carried, had not Dullius, one of the tribunes of the people, ſtood up, and inſiſted that no means of a violent nature ſhould be uſed. This Dullius was a man of great moderation; he loved his country, and wiſhed well to her intereſts, but he could not bear the thoughts of ſeeing one part of the people tear the other to pieces. He ſaid, that the death of Virginia had been already ſufficiently revenged, and therefore he deſired that they would have recourſe to lenient meaſures. He addreſſed himſelf to the ſenate with ſuch

honeſt freedom and ſo much warmth, that all eyes were fixed upon him, and while he ſhewed himſelf a moſt worthy member of the community, his whole conduct teſtified that he was the friend of the meaneſt individual. He told them, that there had been too many puniſhed on account of the late troubles that had happened in the city, and therefore begged that there might be an end of them, in order to reconcile all parties together, and make them live in harmony with each other, as free-born Romans, who were determined at all events to ſupport the dignity and honour of their city, and extend their conqueſts over the reſt of the world, by their power and perſeverance in ſupporting their armies.

At firſt the ſenate ſeemed ſatisfied with what had been told them, but it was not long before new diſſentions took place, as will always happen when the people and their new magiſtrates are not on good terms. The tribunes and their new conſuls did all they could to ſuppreſs the power of the patricians, and on every occaſion became ſo fond of popularity, that nothing was refuſed to the people, which they could grant, altho' they knew that many of their requeſts were inconſiſtent with the honour and ſafety of the republic. They inſiſted that a law ſhould paſs, and they actually brought it into execution, by which it was decreed, that in all popular elections of magiſtrates, the plebians ſhould have the ſame power as the patricians, and by this the dignity of the ſenate was greatly abridged.

The ſenate was enraged to the higheſt degree, when they found their authority thus wreſted from them, but it was not long before they procured an opportunity of teſtifying their reſentment.

The Æquii had taken up arms, and the conſuls marched againſt them, and obtained a complete victory,

victory, after which they returned to Rome, and demanded a triumph. They had no doubt of their requeſt being complied with, but they were miſtaken, for the ſenate told them, that they had no right to expect ſuch an honour, as they were utterly unworthy of it.

This was an unexpected ſtroke to the conſuls, but popularity gained them what they could not obtain from the ſenate. The people met together, and decreed them a triumph, altho' they knew it was inconſiſtent with the Roman conſtitution. The two parties continued to oppoſe each other in the moſt violent manner for ſeveral years together, by which the power of the ſtate became much weakened, and their foreign enemies conceived great hopes of making them an eaſy prey to their ambition, and ſharing among them thoſe territories which the Romans had annected to their antient dominions.

The Volſcii and the Æquii were ſo rejoiced in the conqueſts they made, that their armies approached almoſt to the gates of Rome, while both the courage and the virtue of the Roman people ſeemed to have been totally loſt. So fatal are all inteſtine diviſions in a ſtate, and in the utmoſt ſenſe of the word, deſtructive of public liberty. While they were going on in this manner, ſkirmiſhing with each other without coming to a general engagement, and while it was doubtful who would in the end be victorious, a diſpute aroſe between the inhabitants of Ardea and Aricia, concerning the partition of ſome lands, and they both agreed to refer it to the Roman ſenate, leaving them as arbitrators to decide between them, in order to put an end to their differences, and ſettle every thing to the mutual ſatisfaction of both, ſo as to prevent for the U. C. 309.

future any controverſy of that nature that might happen to ariſe.

It ſeems that the ſenate did not conſider the affair as a thing that they had any buſineſs to intermeddle with; from whence we may infer, that they were men of honour, who did not chuſe to aſſume a power with which they were not inveſted. But what the wiſdom of the ſenate refuſed, the people took upon themſelves, and voted that the lands in diſpute belonged to Rome, and therefore took poſſeſſion of them in the moſt fraudulent manner, and contrary to the faith of the moſt ſolemn treaties.

The ſenate looked upon the conduct of the people as encouraged by their tribunes with indignation, for they had not only trampled upon the laws, but they ſeemed to ſeek nothing leſs than that of making themſelves abſolute, and ſo, under the name of liberty, eſtabliſh a ſyſtem of arbitrary power. A propoſal was made in the ſenate by the tribunes, that the plebians and patricians ſhould marry their children to each other, and altho' this was violently oppoſed by many of the ſenators, yet the clamours of the people, who could ſet no bounds to their extravagance, obliged them to comply with it, in hopes that they would now be fully ſatisfied, and not trouble them any more. Such is in general the conſequence of popular prejudices, and therefore thoſe who ſit at the helm of affairs, in order to make laws and adminiſter juſtice, ought, upon every occaſion, to join fortitude with moderation.

One would have thought, that a conceſſion of ſo extraordinary a nature, made by the ſenate, would have put an end to all manner of diſputes, but it did not; for the more they were gratified in their requeſts, the more they continued to aſk. When they were called upon to take up arms againſt the common

common enemy, they all refuſed to enliſt, upon which the conſuls met together, and Claudius propoſed that a certain number of conſuls ſhould be choſen, one half of whom were to be from among the patricians, and the other from among the people. He ſaid that this ſcheme would preſerve the dignity of the conſuls, and not bring them into that contempt under which they laboured; but it had no effect, in order to promote the honour and ſafety of the people.

That nothing might be wanting to eſtabliſh the power of the people, it was propoſed that the conſuls ſhould begin by aſking the opinion of the youngeſt ſenator, contrary to the antient cuſtom, which was to begin with the oldeſt; and accordingly, the next time when the ſenate met, the conſuls came into the forum, and declared that ſome of their members had held private conſultations together, wherein they had formed conſpiracies againſt the liberties of the people, and of laying plans for overturning the government. Some of the younger members propoſed, that all the people in the city ſhould be reduced to a ſtate of equality, becauſe none had ſo much right to enjoy power as thoſe who had ventured their lives in the field of battle for the liberties of their country.

This occaſioned long debates in the ſenate, and Claudius ſpoke in ſuch an inveterate manner, that many of the people were in a manner enraged againſt him. While they were diſputing with each other, and not agreed upon any plan of government whatever, by which the public peace could be preſerved, Genutius ſtood up, and propoſed that three of the patricians and as many of the plebians ſhould be choſen for one year, and inveſted with the ſame authority

authority as the conſuls. This was propoſed as an expedient; for no ſooner was their power to expire, than the people were to have it in their power to ſet up any form of government they thought proper.

The people were altogether unanimous in embracing this new propoſal, eſpecially when they conſidered that one half of theſe magiſtrates were to be choſen from among themſelves; yet ſuch is the fluctuating ſtate of human affairs, that there was not one of the plebians judged worthy of diſcharging the duties of ſo important an office; ſo that the choice fell upon the patricians.

U. C. 310. It is ſurpriſing to conſider what a number of different forms of government had taken place in Rome from the expulſion of Tarquin, and here we have an inſtance of a new one not heard of before. Nothing can ſatisfy the demands of an enraged multitude, and therefore it is the duty of government, on every occaſion, to give them no room for complaint. If the people are become formidable to thoſe who are in power, all laws will become weak and inſignificant, and new demands will only promote freſh commotions.

The augurs, to whom the Roman people were the moſt abject ſlaves, ſaid that ſomething amiſs had happened in the election of thoſe officers who aſſumed the name of military tribunes, and therefore, at the end of three months their office expired. Thus we find, that there was nothing to be ſeen but a continual fluctuation between one form of government and another, and therefore, as ſoon as the military tribunes were depoſed, the conſuls came again into office. At the ſame time a new ſet of officers were choſen, who were called cenſors, and who were to be elected every five years.

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The power with which theſe new officers were inveſted, was of a very extenſive nature; for they were to take notice of all irregularities that happened in the city, and to make an eſtimate of the value of ſuch eſtates as belonged to every individual. They were likewiſe to ſuppreſs all ſorts of immorality, and to degrade all thoſe who did not act conſiſtent with the laws.

For ſome time the people ſeemed reconciled to their new form of government, and Gegamius, one of the conſuls, having obtained a victory over the Volſcians, a public triumph was decreed him by the unanimous conſent of the people. There is ſomething extremely weak in the human mind, eſpecially when men look for an empty ſhew of pageantry as a reward of their labours, in preference to any thing elſe of a more exalted nature. We ſtretch out our hands to graſp at the ſhadow while we loſe the ſubſtance. Undoubtedly it is the duty of every government to treat with the utmoſt reſpect thoſe ſervants of the republic who have done every thing in their power to promote its intereſt; but for all that, nothing is equal to the ſmiles of a good conſcience both before God and man. Generals may ſeek for applauſe; and undoubtedly it is a very great thing to obtain it, but ſtill it is much more ſo to deſerve it. All ranks of people in Rome ſeemed now to be happily united together, but it was not long before their happineſs was interrupted, as will appear from what I am now going to mention.

U. C. 313 A moſt dreadful famine broke out in the city, and as all ranks of people were affected thereby, the conſuls were accuſed of not having ſtocked the public granary with a ſufficient quantity of

of corn, in order to ſupply the wants of the people during ſuch a time of preſſing neceſſity.

During this time, when nothing but complaints were to be heard, Spurius Mælius, a rich Patrician, bought up a large quantity of corn from the Tuſcans, and diſtributed it in ſmall quantities every day among the people: but at laſt his houſe became an aſylum for all ſorts of vagabonds, who rather choſe to ſubſiſt by his benevolence than by their own labour. He was a man of an unbounded ambition, and his liberality was only a cloak for more ſecret and important deſigns, ſuch as the people could not be ſuppoſed able to comprehend. Indeed, there is nothing ſo likely to promote the views of tyrants, as that of making the people their friends; for whether their approbation is beſtowed in a right or a wrong manner, yet they are ſure to gain a vaſt number of adherents, and the ſtream of popularity will generally bear the ſway.

Spurius Mælius having thus laid his ſchemes in the moſt artful manner, and brought over ſeveral of the citizens to his party, he cauſed a large quantity of warlike ſtores to be brought into his houſe during the night, intending to take the whole government into his own hands, and make himſelf an abſolute ſovereign over the people.

The conſpiracy was not, however, carried on ſo ſecretly but ſome of the people got notice of it, and they communicated their ſuſpicions to the ſenate, who rejoiced in an opportunity of having it in their power to humble the pride of the demagogue. Accordingly it was agreed upon by the ſenate, that a dictator ſhould be choſen, and inveſted with plenary powers to act in the name of the people. He was to quell all ſorts of conſpiracies, without appealing

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to the people for their approbation of his conduct, and he was to inſpect the conduct of all inferior officers. Thus we may learn that there cannot be any thing like real happineſs in that ſtate where the form of government is not eſtabliſhed upon the moſt laſting foundation. The fluctuating ſtate of government among the Roman people, affected all ranks in ſociety, and every one of the members looked upon themſelves as enemies to each other.

LETTER XXVI.

THE convulſions of the ſtate made it neceſſary to make choice of one ſingle perſon, endowed with public as well as private virtue, to be at the head of the others, for a limited time. After ſome debate in the forum, it was agreed that Cincinnatus, who had done ſo much for his country, ſhould be made choice of to reſcue the people from the dangers they were in, and reſtore peace to the country.

Cincinnatus was now upwards of eighty, but moderation and exerciſe had preſerved both his ſenſes and faculties. He had never ſought after honours, but neceſſity found him out that he might heal the wounds of his bleeding country, and that his name might be tranſmitted to the lateſt ages with the moſt illuſtrious fame. Being ſolemnly inveſted once more with the high office of dictator, he ſummoned Spurius Mælius to appear before him, who treated the ſenators in the moſt inſolent manner, becauſe he fondly imagined the people, whoſe idol he was, would not ſuffer him to be brought to juſtice. The dictator who had a ſpirit conſiſtent with the dignity of that office to which he had been advanced by the unanimous

conſent

conſent of his fellow-citizens, ſent Ahala the maſter of the horſe to bring him to the tribunal, but he ſtill refuſing to comply, the maſter of the horſe killed him with his own hands, and returned to the dictator who thanked him for his reſolution in not ſuffering an individual to trample on the laws, and ſet public juſtice at defiance.

The death of Mælius was an unexpected ſtroke to the tribunes and their adherents; but Cincinnatus regardleſs of what they ſaid, and no way intimidated by their threats, ordered the houſe of the haughty oppoſer of his power to be pulled down and all his goods to be ſold, and the money to be diſtributed among the poor. Nothing however could pleaſe the people, for when the next election came on, they inſiſted that inſtead of conſuls, military tribunes ſhould be appointed to conduct the affairs of government. The popular clamour was ſo great that the ſenate thought it moſt prudent to comply with their requeſts; but at the ſame time care was taken that thoſe of the Patricians ſhould be choſen into the office, to ballance the power of the plebians, and keep the people under proper reſtraints. This form of government did not however continue above a few months, for it was again agreed upon that conſuls ſhould be choſen in the ſame manner as before.

Theſe inteſtine diviſions among the people who ought to have been united together from motives of real intereſt, encouraged the Volſcians, and the Veians, to renew their depredations, and for ſome time they were very ſucceſsful. The Romans ſuſpecting the fidelity of ſome of theſe people whom they had conquered, ſent ambaſſadors to Fidenae, a city near their frontiers, but the people roſe in a body, and murdered the ambaſſadors, after which they

they went and joined themſelves to the Veians, in order to be revenged on ſuch of the Romans as had impoſed upon them the moſt illegal taxes.

Every thing ſeemed now running into confuſion, and therefore Mamercus Æmilius was choſen dictator. He immediately raiſed an army and marched againſt the Veians, over whom he obtained a complete victory, and returned home to the city amidſt the united acclamations of the people, who looked upon him as their deliverer.

The ſenate and the conſuls for ſome time acted with ſuch prudence that when the Veians again took up arms, another dictator was choſen without any oppoſition from the plebians. The perſon choſen to be dictator was the ſame Æmilius that had ſo worthily diſcharged his duty before, and he reſolved to apply himſelf to ſuch important affairs as would ſettle the fluctuating ſtate of government, and give ſatisfaction to all ranks of people. He got a decree paſſed in the ſenate, by which the cenſors, who had been eight years in office, were to reſign their employments at the end of every eighteen months; but no ſooner were the cenſors inveſted with power than they joined in a conſpiracy againſt him. When he had laid down the office of dictator, they exhibited complaints againſt him, in order to obtain an ample revenge, and at the ſame time fine him in a very conſiderable ſum.

U. C. 320. The people again inſiſted that tribunes ſhould be choſen from among themſelves, and their requeſt was complied with, but they did not long continue in office, and then the ſenate made choice of conſuls. Poſthumious Tubero was elected dictator to oppoſe the incurſions of the Æquii, and he behaved with ſo much courage in

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an expedition he made againſt them, that he was honoured with a public triumph.

U. C. 326. The people of Rome were no ſooner free from the fears of a foreign invaſion, than they formed parties among themſelves; and this obliged them to chooſe Æmilius a third time for their dictator, and his ſucceſs againſt the common enemy was as great as before, when he enjoyed the ſame office.

Nothing however could calm the diſſentions in the city, for during the ſpace of fifteen years, the government continued to fluctuate from one form to another. The Romans ſeemed to have loſt that ſpirit of virtue and freedom which had ſo much diſtinguiſhed their anceſtors, and military diſcipline was totally neglected. The ſenate domineered over the people, and did all they could to oppreſs them, and the people impatient with the yoke of ſlavery, entered into conſultation how they might get rid of ſuch tyranny.

The neighbouring ſtates committed many depredations on the Roman territories, and ſo divided and diſquieted were the people, that they were conſtantly upon the apprehenſions of an invaſion of the enemy, obliged to chooſe a dictator. By the behaviour of ſome of theſe dictators the people were again made acquainted with military diſcipline; but no ſooner were the wars over, than the former contentions broke out afreſh, and when the people had no enemy to oppoſe abroad, they were ſure to make ſome of their friends at home. From this we may learn that nothing but the military art can keep alive the ſpirit of freedom among a barbarous people, for being ignorant of the arts of peace, they never take pleaſure in any

any thing ſo much as committing depredations on their neighbours.

An abſolute power and deſpotic authority ſo often intruſted with men whoſe paſſions are not well known, had in a manner almoſt deprived the people of that freedom which was the life and ſoul of their conſtitution; but ſtill the people were not ſenſible of their danger. As thoſe dictators were choſen from among the ſenators, ſo the reſt of that venerable body made no oppoſition to their election, and the people never objected againſt following them to the field of battle, becauſe the plunder taken from the common enemy was equally divided among them. The dictators made uſe of theſe methods in order to acquire popularity, and for ſome time they enjoyed a very large ſhare of it.

While things were carried on in this manner, and each of the ſtates doing all in their power to oppoſe each other; the ſenate took into conſideration the diſtracted ſtate of their country, and endeavoured, if poſſible, to abridge the power of the people, under pretence of conciliating their affections; from whence we may learn that real virtue was loſt among all ranks in the commonwealth, and each were bent upon the deſtruction of the other. The Roman ſoldiers who had hitherto taken the field in time of war, were peaſants who ſubſiſted by the cultivation of the lands allotted to them, and therefore as their own ſafety was connected with that of the ſtate, they took no wages, but defended the liberties of their country for nothing.

This was undoubtedly a proof of their love to the commonwealth, of which they were members; but as the war ſometimes laſted above a year, their farms were left uncultivated, and although they acquired

acquired a large ſhare of plunder, yet it was not ſufficient to ſupply them with the neceſſaries of life, for they were often reduced to great indigence. Indeed there is nothing like agriculture to ſupply the immediate wants of the people in any country whatever; for it often happens that plunder and mercantile articles are altogether inadequate to anſwer ſo beneficial a purpoſe. The neglect of agriculture while they were engaged in the camp and the field, obliged them to contract debts when they returned home, and it generally happened that their creditors treated them in the moſt cruel manner.

The ſenate reſolving to eſtabliſh their own power by availing themſelves of ſuch a favourable circumſtance, impoſed a tax upon the whole body of the citizens, out of which the ſoldiers were to be paid; ſo that for the future they might have no reaſon to complain that they had left their families ſtarving while they were fighting the battles of the commonwealth. This decree gave an air of dignity to the ſenate, for by an equal diſtribution of the public money they raiſed an army without being under any obligations to the tribunes of the people, to whom on all former occaſions they had been obliged to apply when the enemy made incurſions into their territories.

The popular applauſe was ſo great that the citizens ſurrounded the ſenate houſe, and teſtified their approbation by the loudeſt applauſes, offering at the ſame time to follow their generals into any place they thought proper to lead them, and promiſing that if their wages were regularly paid they would never again complain of injuſtice.

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This act of the ſenate was one of thoſe ſtrokes in politicks that is ſeldom to be met with in hiſtory, for they were now the ſole maſters of a formidable army, and could give the command of it to whom they pleaſed. As the Veians had ſeveral times broke the faith of public treaties, the Roman ſenate reſolved to make them the higheſt objects of their reſentment, and to leave nothing undone till they had brought them into a ſtate of ſubjection. Indeed the difficulties they had to encounter were very great, but perſeverance, the effect of a fixed reſolution, will enable people to go through with the greateſt hardſhips, and face the moſt threatening dangers. U. C. 347.

Some revolutions had lately taken place among the Veians, ſo that they were divided into parties, but their chief city was populous and ſtrongly fortified, ſo that there was ſcarce a poſſibility of attacking it with any hopes of ſucceſs. But nothing could intimidate the ſpirit of the Romans, who were determined either to conquer their enemy, or give up their own liberties at the deareſt expence, namely, that of their lives, liberties, properties, and every thing that can be counted valuable to a member of human ſociety.

Accordingly the army took the field with a fixed reſolution not to return to their native city till ſuch time as they had accompliſhed their favourite purpoſe. Indeed the ſtrength of the place required the utmoſt reſolution and perſeverance to go through with the many difficulties that preſented themſelves; for the citadel was exceeding ſtrong, and fortified according to the greateſt efforts of art in that age.

During the compaſs of ten years, the ſiege continued with various ſucceſs on both ſides, and both the

the Romans and the Veians were in their turns reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs. Rome itſelf was almoſt depopulated, for the flower of their youth was drawn off to make up the loſs that had happened in conſequence of the frequent ſallies made by the Veians. This occaſioned a new law of a very extraordinary nature, which nothing but the exigences of the ſtate could teſtify as warrantable. This was no other, than that the batchelors, who had arrived at the age of puberty, ſhould marry the widows of ſuch of the ſoldiers as had been killed during the war. This new law occaſioned many murmurs among the people; for although ſome might approve of the wives appointed them by the ſtate, yet others did not, becauſe marriage muſt, in order to make it valid, be the effect of a free choice by both the contracting parties, who alone are ſuppoſed moſt capable to judge of each others inclinations.

The Romans began to doubt that they would never be able to go through with the fatigues of the ſiege, for the Veii remained as obſtinate as ever, and ſeemed determined to ſell their liberties as dear as poſſible. This induced the ſenate to make choice of another Dictator, and the election fell upon Furius Camillus, a man of great abilities, and capable of going through with the moſt difficult undertakings. He had formerly diſcharged the duties of ſeveral very important offices, and on many occaſions his merits and abilities had gained him the good will of the people. His character was in ſuch high eſteem for knowledge in the military art, that moſt of thoſe who were able to bear arms, conſidered it as an honour to fight under one whom they looked upon as an ornament to their country.

Accord-

Accordingly a great army being raiſed, he began with attacking ſuch of the auxiliaries as had joined in a confederacy againſt Rome. The Capenates and the Faliſci were both defeated, and their towns reduced to aſhes, while all that were left of the inhabitants were obliged to ſubmit to what conditions the conqueror thought proper. Such will always be the ſucceſs attending the arms of a general who is in poſſeſſion of the hearts of the ſoldiers. Many engagements have been loſt becauſe the ſoldiers had no confidence in their leaders, while wonders have been performed when they fought with chearfulneſs.

Camillus was one of thoſe generals who to the greateſt valour joined the moſt conſummate prudence; for he knew the ſtrength of the place he had to attack, and therefore he reſolved to have recourſe to ſtratagem. He contrived to make an opening under the walls unperceived by the enemy, and having completed his deſign at vaſt expence and trouble, he diſpatched a meſſenger to the ſenate, informing them that he was ſure of ſucceſs, and deſiring all the citizens who intended to ſhare of the plunder, to come immediately and join the army. His ſcheme had been carried on with ſo much ſecrecy, that the enemy had not the leaſt thoughts of it, till they ſaw the Romans in the heart of the city carrying deſtruction and death along with them.

The city of Veii being thus taken, after a ſiege that laſted ten years, and the ſoldiers enriched with the ſpoils, Camillus was drawn in triumph in a chariot by four white horſes, which gave great offence to ſuch as were addicted to ſuperſtition, becauſe they conſidered that honour as belonging only to their gods. So ſtrongly does ſuperſtitious notions operate

operate on the human mind, and from this we may ſee how neceſſary it is for thoſe in power to ſuit themſelves on ſome particular occaſions to the notions of the vulgar, notwithſtanding their being ever ſo wild and extravagant. Legiſlators, as well as generals, have in all ages found it neceſſary to ſubmit to the reigning taſte of the vulgar, and in conſequence of doing ſo, many great actions have been performed; but when they meddle with any of their ſuperſtitious ceremonies, they are ſure to involve themſelves in difficulties.

A propoſal was now made in the ſenate, that one half of the Roman citizens ſhould ſettle in the conquered city of Veii, and this being violently oppoſed by Camillus, he procured the hatred of the tribunes, who looked upon him as an enemy to the ſtate. This conduct, in one endowed with ſo much knowledge as Camillus, induced the people to look upon him as one who had nothing in view beſides that of trampling upon thoſe privileges which he was bound by the moſt ſacred oaths to preſerve inviolate; and to increaſe the public clamour, he inſiſted that the tenth part of all the plunder taken from the enemy, ſhould be reſtored by the ſoldiers, and dedicated to Apollo, in conſequence of a vow that he had made before he took the city of Veii. This was what the ſoldiers had not the moſt diſtant notion of, and therefore what they had got as the reward of their ſervices, had been ſpent before the demand was made.

They knew not what to do, and while they were perplexing themſelves in contriving ſchemes to ſatisfy the demands of the Dictator, the women ſold all their rings, bracelets, and ſuch other female ornaments as were worn in that age, in order to make good the deficiency. This generous act of the female,

females was ſo highly applauded both by the ſenate and the people, that it was decreed by the unanimous conſent of both, that for the future the women ſhould have orations pronounced upon them at their funerals, an honour that none but the men had hitherto enjoyed, nor indeed any but thoſe who did ſome ſignal ſervices to their country.

The abilities of Camillus, however, got the better of popular prejudices; for the Faliſci having again taken up arms, he was choſen one of the military tribunes, and ſent at the head of the army to command the forces. His knowledge and prudence ſhone as conſpicuous as ever, and having defeated them in a pitched battle, he attacked their chief city, then called Falarii. It was a ſmall place but fortified in the ſtrongeſt manner, according to the art of war in that age; ſo that it could not have been eaſily taken without making uſe of ſome ſtratagem.

While Camillus was concerting the moſt proper methods to beſiege the city, a perfidious wretch who acted in the character of a ſchool-maſter, and had under his care the ſons of the principal citizens, contrived means to get them conveyed to the Roman camp, and offered to deliver them up to the general.

Camillus had too much generoſity to take the advantage of injured innocence, and therefore he ordered the traitor to be ſtripped naked, his hands tied behind him, and each of his ſcholars being furniſhed with rods, were to whip him in that manner into the city. This was a moſt noble and generous action, and it has given the hero Camillus a place in the temple of worthies. It was likewiſe of the utmoſt ſervice to him in his military character; for no ſooner had the chief men of the city

been informed of his generoſity, than they ſent deputies to him, informing him that they were willing to ſubmit, and at the ſame time comply with any conditions, that the ſenate, in a reaſonable manner, would think proper to impoſe upon them.

Camillus did not make an improper uſe of the power which the people had in a voluntary manner given him over them, for he only obliged them to make good the expences of the war, in order to pay the army; and having taken them under the protection of the ſenate, he returned to Rome. He doubted not but the ſervices he had done to his country would have procured him the reſpect of every individual, but the tribunes of the people never ceaſed to prefer new accuſations againſt him as one that was an enemy to his country. They ſaid, among other things, that he had concealed for his own uſe many parts of the plunder, and he received a ſummons to appear in the forum, and anſwer all the charges exhibited againſt him.

When Camillus received the ſummons, he knew that the intention of his enemies was to deſtroy him, and therefore he reſolved to provide for his own ſafety. He took an affectionate leave of his wife and children, reſolving never more to ſee Rome, and when he had proceeded as far as one of the gates of the city, he looked back to the capitol and begged of the gods that his fellow-citizens might one day be made ſenſible of their more than horrid ingratitude, in having uſed him in ſuch a manner, after he had done every thing to ſerve them Having uttered theſe words, he retired to Ardea, where he had not been long, when he heard that the tribunes of the people had ſeized on the greateſt part of his eſtate.

While

While the tribunes of the people were triumphing in the ſucceſs they had over one of the moſt faithful and accompliſhed men that ever the city of Rome produced, their attention was led to things of much more importance, namely, their own preſervation. Some of thoſe barbarians, who in that age inhabited what was then called Gaul, and what we now call France, had ſometime before this period croſſed the Alps, and ſettled in Italy. The climate and the natural products of the country invited them thither, and they were now become a moſt formidable body of people. Their numbers continued to increaſe daily, and beſides the children born among them, many of their tranſalphine countrymen continued to mix themſelves with them. Their courage was ſo great, that they drove away all the antient inhabitants wherever they ſettled; for they were impatient of reſtraint, and ſeemed to aim at nothing leſs than univerſal monarchy. New colonies from beyond the Alpine mountains continued daily to join them, and they formed a ſort of government conſiſtent with the rude notions of thoſe times, and ſought to extend their conqueſts ſtill further. They had made choice of one Brennus for their king, or rather their commander, while they were engaged in any expedition, and he had ſuch experience in the art of war, that he carried every thing before him.

Theſe Gauls were at this time beſieging the city of Cluſium, and the inhabitants being much frightened at their ſavage appearance, as well as the barbarity of their manners, ſent ambaſſadors to Rome for aſſiſtance from the ſenate againſt the common enemy. The ſenate, who under the colour of public virtue, wanted to eſtabliſh their own importance upon the moſt ſolid foundation, diſpatched ambaſ-

ſadors to the Gauls, deſiring them to deſiſt from any further acts of a hoſtile nature, and ſuffer the people whom they had unjuſtly attacked, to remain in quiet poſſeſſion of their property. The ambaſſadors ſent upon this important affair were three young Patricians of the family of the Fabii, who had lately been made choice of as ſenators. They were acquainted with the whole of the military art, and capable of conducting the moſt dangerous enterprizes; but none of their fellow citizens looked upon them as any way qualified for negotiating ſuch affairs as were neceſſary to ſupport the dignity of the republic.

When they came into the tent of Brennus, they were received with the utmoſt reſpect, and when he demanded their buſineſs, he told them that they might open their minds to him without the leaſt reſerve, becauſe he was determined to treat them with that reſpect due to Roman Patricians, and conſiſtent with the dignity of thoſe ſenators who gave laws to ſuch an illuſtrious republic.

In anſwer to this the ambaſſadors told him, that it was an eſtabliſhed rule among all the Italian ſtates, never to make war againſt each other, unleſs a ſufficient provocation had been given; deſiring, at the ſame time, to know what the people of Cluſium had done to offend the Gauls.

Brennus told them that the people againſt whom he was then making war, were a ſet of poor puſillanimous wretches, and that it was conſiſtent with the character of brave men to make conqueſts wherever they could. He added, that the Romans had no reaſon to find fault with the conduct of the Gauls, while they knew that their own power had been eſtabliſhed by ſeizing the territories of their neighbours.

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The haughty anſwer which Brennus gave to the ambaſſadors was more than they were able to bear unleſs they had diſſembled their reſentment, and therefore, as ſoon as they entered the city, a tumult enſued, and one of the Gauls was killed. Brennus ſent an ambaſſador to Rome to demand ſatisfaction for the injury; but the ſenate having treated him with contempt, the haughty Gaul gave up all thoughts of taking Cluſium, and drawing his forces together, he reſolved to lead them immediately againſt Rome, not doubting but his arms would be attended with the deſired ſucceſs.

LETTER XXVII.

THE barbarity of the Gauls, and the dreadful appearance they made, frightened thoſe people in the towns through which they paſſed, and made them leave their habitations, in order to find ſhelter in the woods and mountains. But notwithſtanding a few exceſſes committed by theſe barbarians, yet the whole deſign they had in view was the deſtruction of Rome, and for that purpoſe they continued their march towards the city in the moſt rapid manner.

The Roman army conſiſted of forty thouſand men, under the command of ſix military tribunes; ſo that in number they were equal to the Gauls; but diſcipline had been neglected; and as each of the tribunes had different ends in view, ſo there is no wonder that the army ſhould become divided againſt itſelf. In all collective bodies, whether civil or military, diſſenſions are ſure to promote their ruin. The Roman tribunes looked upon themſelves as all equal, whereas it was their duty

to have choſen one of their own number to act as their commander in chief, and at the ſame time ſubmit to all his orders in the moſt chearful manner. A moſt dreadful battle enſued in a plain near the river Allia, within a few miles of Rome, and the Gauls defeated the Romans with great ſlaughter. This was a terrible blow, and at the ſame time an unexpected one; for the Romans looked upon themſelves as confident of victory; for they conſidered the Gauls as barbarians.

The Gauls reſolved not to loſe an opportunity of improving the victory to the utmoſt advantage, and therefore purſuing the diſappointed Romans, moſt of them were drowned in the Tiber, while a few only made their eſcape into the city, to carry the diſmal news to the ſenate and the citizens. Nothing but terror, and the expectation of immediate death, was now to be ſeen in the countenances of the few that ſtill remained, and they reſolving to ſell their lives as dear as poſſible, fortified themſelves in the capitol. The prieſts endeavoured to inſpire the ſenators with the moſt ſuperſtitious notions, and intimated that a voluntary ſacrifice of their lives was the moſt complete atonement they could make for the ſins of the people.

Accordingly they all dreſſed themſelves in the robes peculiar to their offices, and in that manner ſat down upon their ivory chairs in the forum, to wait the arival of the enemy, who were then plundering the city of its moſt valuable effects. At laſt Brennus entered with his forces into the forum, where he was ſurpriſed to ſee the ſenators in their robes, regardleſs of their lives. The barbarians were at firſt awed by the ſplendid appearance that the ſenators made in their robes, and they began to conclude, according to their ſuperſtitious notions, that

that they were gods. In the mean time one of the Gauls pulled Papyrius, an aged ſenator, by the beard, and the noble Roman not being able to endure ſuch inſolence, ſtarted up, and ſtruck the fellow to the ground with the ivory batton that he held in his hand.

No ſooner had Papyrius ſtruck the Gaul, than a general ſlaughter enſued, and the ſenators, with the prieſts, being all killed, the ſoldiers ſet fire to the city, and every thing was reduced to aſhes but the capitol.

Nothing was now to be ſeen in Rome but one univerſal ſcene of ruin and miſery, nor was the neighbouring country much better, for the Gauls went every day among the peaſants, and robbed them of their moſt valuable effects. Brennus made ſeveral attempts upon the capitol, but the native ſpirit of the Romans began to revive; for diſtreſs had ſtimulated their courage, and made them ſenſible of their own importance. U. C. 364

The capitol was beſieged by the Gauls in the moſt furious manner, while the Romans continued to make the moſt vigorous defence, although they were in a manner almoſt deſtitute of proviſions. Nothing leſs than the utter deſtruction of Rome ſeemed to be the object that Brennus had in view, and while the Romans had ſcarce one ſpark of hope remaining among them, an incident took place that they little expected. This was no other than a meſſenger from Camillus, who had, by the utmoſt effects of human prudence, made his way into the city, and climed over an almoſt inacceſſible rock into the capitol. He told them that Camillus, whom they had treated in ſo unworthy a manner, was advancing with a large body of forces to their relief, and that he had defeated a party of the Gauls, whom he

found laying the adjacent country under contributions. All that he deſired was to be once more choſen Dictator, and his requeſt being complied with, he took upon him the command of the army, notwithſtanding the many difficulties that ſeemed to preſent themſelves.

Brennus, in conſequence of ſome information he had received from a ſpy, reſolved to take the capitol by a ſtratagem, and for that purpoſe traced on the rock the footſteps of men, from which it was in a manner evident, that the getting into the place was not a matter of impoſſibility, but might be brought about by perſeverance. Accordingly, a choſen company of the Gauls were diſpatched, in order to make an attempt on the place, and, when they had got as far as the wall that ſurrounded to the rock, ſome geeſe made a noiſe, by which the garriſon was alarmed, and every one flew to the firſt arms they could lay hold of. While they were in that ſtate of confuſion, Manlius, one of the Patricians, behaved in ſo courageous a manner, that the reſt of the people were animated by his example, and reſolved to ſupport the liberties of their country, or periſh in the moſt glorious manner. Such of the Gauls as had mounted the ramparts, were inſtantly thrown down headlong, and daſhed to pieces, while ſuch as were below fled in the utmoſt confuſion, and carried the news of their bad ſucceſs to the army. Brennus now loſt all hopes of ſucceeding according to his wiſhes, and therefore he thought that the beſt thing he could do would be to come to an accommodation with the beſieged. It was propoſed that the Romans ſhould pay to the Gauls one thouſand pounds weight of gold, in order to obtain their liberty; but when the money was brought out, the Gauls made ſome ſhuffling excuſes,

excuſes, under pretence that the ſcales were not properly poiſed, and Brennus, caſting his ſword into the ſcales, ſaid, in the moſt inſulting manner, that the Romans being deficient in juſtice, were devoted to deſtruction.

The Roman people now ſaw that they were not to expect any favour from the haughty Gauls, and therefore in the utmoſt ſtate of deſpair gave up all for loſt; but while they were in this ſtate of agitation, they received notice that Camillus, their late Dictator, and whom for the preſent they had inveſted with plenary powers, was marching with a mighty army to their aſſiſtance. This gave ſome life to their drooping ſpirits, and in the mean time Camillus arrived with his men, aſked what was the reaſon why the Gauls would not accept of the money that had been offered them.

Being informed by the general of the Gauls that the diſpute was concerning the weight of the money that had been tendered by the Romans, he ordered, in the moſt authoritative manner, that the money ſhould be immediately returned; adding, at the ſame time, that the Romans could not, conſiſtent with their dignity, ſubmit ſo low as to purchaſe their freedom with gold; but they would not fail to purchaſe it with iron. By theſe words he intended to inſinuate that he, in the name of the Roman people, was ready to ſtand up in their defence, and rather than do any thing derogatory to the honour of the republic, he would ſell his life at the deareſt expence, and triumph over the enemies of Rome, or ſuffer himſelf to be buried under the walls, rather than have diſgrace entailed upon him and his family.

The Gauls were too haughty to give up their pretenſions to a ſuperiority over the Roman people,

and therefore Camillus having gathered his forces together, engaged in a pitched battle, and the Gauls were defeated with great ſlaughter. The conſequence of this engagement was, that the Gauls were obliged to return to their own country, but Rome continued in a heap of aſhes, except the capitol, which had been kept from deſtruction by the valour of a few of the citizens. The tribunes of the people propoſed that the whole body of the Roman citizens ſhould repair to Veii, where there were houſes ready for their reception; but Camillus ſaid that it was in every reſpect inconſiſtent with their dignity to leave the venerable ſeat of their anceſtors, and go and ſettle in a city that had been taken by conqueſt from the common enemy.

This remonſtrance had ſuch an effect on the minds of the people, that they reſolved to rebuild the city, notwithſtanding all the difficulties they laboured under in order to make it as elegant as it was before the Gauls made the attack upon it. It is impoſſible to expreſs with what chearfulneſs they went to work, and their perſeverance ſuperceded every conſideration, while Rome, in conſequence of their induſtry, roſe to a ſtate of grandeur, far ſuperior to what it was before it was taken by the Gauls.

U. C. 369. Rome being thus rebuilt in a very elegant manner, the people ſeemed to be reconciled to the arts of peace; but wars broke out, and called for a further exertion of their abilities. Camillus was again choſen Dictator, and his abilities ſhone conſpicuous in conſequence of the advantages that he obtained over the common enemy. But no character is free from blame. Manlius had done every thing in his power towards defending the capitol, and the citizens looking

looking upon him as worthy ſome mark of their regard, built him a houſe as a teſtimony of their gratitude; one would have thought that ſuch honours were all that Manlius had a right to expect, but his ambition was in a manner unbounded. He could not bear the thoughts that any other perſon in Rome ſhould be ſuperior to himſelf, and therefore ſome of the common people inſinuated that he aimed at abſolute authority over the ſtate.

Camillus, in order to eſtabliſh his power over the Romans, ingratiated himſelf with the populace, and having paid all their debts, declared that for the future none of thoſe who owed money ſhould ever be impriſoned by their creditors, upon condition that he was placed at the head of their affairs, and indulged with plenary powers to act in their ſtead till ſuch time as things were properly ſettled.

While he was going on in this manner, the ſenate ſaw into his deſigns, and reſolved to defeat all the ſchemes which they imagined he had tranſacted in order to abridge their power, and eſtabliſh his own importance. Prudence induced them to make choice of Cornelius Coſſus to be Dictator, as a perſon properly qualified to diſcharge all the duties incumbent upon him; and as there had been ſome difference between him and Camillus, it was not doubted but the altercation would be carried on to ſuch a height, that each would become the moſt inveterate enemy to the other.

The Dictator thus inveſted with power, went againſt the neighbouring ſtates, who had taken up arms againſt Rome, and upon his return home to the forum, he told the people he could not, conſiſtent with the duty that he owed to the commonwealth,

wealth, ſuffer Manlius to eſcape without being brought to the moſt condign puniſhment. Camillus was ſtill the favourite of the people, and therefore he reſolved to ſhelter himſelf under their protection, let his conduct be good or bad. He promiſed them privileges they had never before enjoyed, but ſtill the city was filled with diſſenſions, nor was there any probability that better times would take place. Shocking indeed! but not more ſhocking than true; for we are ſurpriſed at what happens to-day, although we may meet with it to-morrow.

Succeſs in war gives ambition to the conqueror to aſpire at greater things; and Camillus being inveſted with authority, as one of the military tribunes, ſent an officer to ſummon Manlius to appear before the people, and anſwer to every charge that ſhould be exhibited againſt him. He appeared in conſequence of the ſummons, but his judges were his enemies, and he being condemned by the unanimous conſent of the people, was thrown headlong from the Tarpeian rock as an enemy to his country. His houſe was razed to the ground, and all thoſe of his family were obliged to aſſume new names, that of Manlius being conſidered as infamous. Her death however was of no ſervice towards quieting the murmurs of the people, and the ſeverity of Camillus made him an object of deteſtation. Nothing however could damp his ſpirit, for he had ſuch abilities that the people made choice of him a ſixth time to be one of their military tribunes, although he did not in the leaſt court that honour. Lucius was appointed to act as his colleague, and he being a man utterly deſtitute of prudence, ventured to engage with the Volſcians without taking the proper meaſures to ſecure his

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own ſafety, a duty incumbent upon every general who would wiſh for the approbation of his country, and who deſires to promote its intereſt and honour.

Camillus was at this time confined to his bed with a ſevere fit of illneſs; but no ſooner had he heard that the Roman army were on the point of being defeated, than he jumped out of bed, and mounting upon horſeback, rode to the field of battle, and took upon himſelf the command of the army. His courage was attended with the deſired ſucceſs, for the ſoldiers who had ſo long fought under his command conſidered him as an object of adoration, and therefore renewed the attack, by which the Volſcians were defeated with great ſlaughter. Camillus returned to Rome crowned with honours and laden with ſpoils, but ſtill the clamour of the people continued as violent as ever. Such as were indebted to the patricians had it not in their power to pay them, and therefore they inſiſted that all ſuch pecuniary obligations ſhould be for ever cancelled. In the mean time the people of Prænesſte, made frequent incurſions into the territories belonging to the Romans, ſo that the latter were obliged to make choice of Quintus Cincinnatus as Dictator, and his ſucceſs in the war was equal to his ambition. He defeated the enemy, and having plundered their chief city, he took the ſtatue of Jupiter, which he brought to Rome in triumph. Imperator having been affixed to this idol, the Romans looked upon it as invaluable, and from the moment that it was placed in the capitol, they began to imagine that their conqueſts would be extended over the world.

The diſputes between the plebians and the patricians were carried on in the ſame violent manner U.C. 375

manner as before, and to add to the inſolence of the plebians, they claimed a ſhare in the government as conſuls and ſenators. They had already been indulged with many favours, but nothing could ſet bounds to their inſolence; for the more they obtained the more they wanted. Envy took place among the females in conſequence of an incident that ought not to be omitted in this place, becauſe it points out the ſprings of action in the human heart.

One of the tribunes of the people, whoſe name was Fabius Ambuſtus, had two daughters, and he married the one to a patrician, and the other to a plebian. It was natural for the two ſiſters to viſit each other, and one day, while the wife of the plebian was ſitting along with her ſiſter, ſome of the ſenators wives came in and made a particular diſtinction between the two, ſo that the wife of the plebian was fired with jealouſy. Indeed it had ſuch an effect upon her, that ſhe fell into a deep melancholy, and gave herſelf wholly up to deſpair. It was ſome time before ſhe would reveal it to her father or her huſband; but at laſt ſhe opened her mind to them, and acknowledged the whole affair. Her father promiſed that nothing ſhould be wanting on his part to bring in a law to remove the grievance ſhe complained of, and went to conſult with her huſband for that purpoſe.

The Agrarian law was ſtill the idol of the people, and it is natural to ſuppoſe that they would leave nothing undone in order to ſupport it, ſuppoſing a motion ſhould be made in the ſenate for its revival. Popular meaſures are ſure to procure reſpect from the giddy and unthinking, and therefore nothing ſeemed ſo likely to bring about the propoſed ſcheme as to get the plebian, who was huſband to the daughter

daughter of Fabius, elected one of the tribunes of the people.

During the ſpace of five years the citizens made no choice of a Dictator, ſo that being deſtitute of a ſupreme magiſtrate, the tribunes of the people, with ſuch other officers as depended upon them, were ſole maſters of the city, and they acted in ſuch an irregular manner, that nothing but anarchy and confuſion was to be ſeen in every part of the city. U. C. 377 to 382

Camillus was again choſen Dictator, but there being no apparent neceſſity for ſuch an officer at that time, nor indeed in many of the ſubſequent times, the office itſelf fell into contempt, while the power of the military tribunes daily continued to gain ground. Such will always be the caſe where magiſtrates make a bad uſe of their power, and where the people, not content with any form of government, are continually propoſing new ſchemes to bring about a revolution. U. C. 382

Manlius Capitolinus was choſen Dictator, and he being the firſt plebian who ever was advanced to ſo elevated an office, he reſolved to acquire popularity at any expence whatever. He made choice of Licinius Stolo to be maſter of the horſe, and a law was made under his direction, whereby it was ordained that no perſon ſhould enjoy any more lands than amounted to five hundred acres; but even this law that had been brought into the ſenate by the dictator, and ſupported by all his influence, was in the firſt inſtance broken into by himſelf; for he purchaſed an eſtate conſiſting of many more acres of land than were conſiſtent with law to be enjoyed by an individual.

The two orders of the ſtate continued ſtill to oppoſe each other, and although the frequent attempts made by their enemies reconciled them till the

the danger was over, yet no ſooner did they return to the city, than the ſame diſſenſions aroſe, and the people were in a manner reduced to the utmoſt ſtate of confuſion. They ſcarce knew who were their maſters, and while they thought it incumbent upon them to ſupport public liberty, they were in the whole of their conduct doing all in their power to eſtabliſh ſlavery, and rivet themſelves in chains for ever, unleſs ſome great and good perſon would take their cauſe in hand.

By this time the Gauls had received ſo many new reinforcements that they propoſed to take the field, and Camillus was again choſen Dictator; but although he acted with great valour, mixed with prudence, yet the conteſts that took place among all ranks of the people, were greater than can well be expreſſed.

Camillus, ever attentive to the intereſts of his country, and a perfect maſter of the military art, propoſed that each of the ſoldiers ſhould have iron helmets as part of their armour, with targets mounted with braſs, by which methods the Gauls were defeated; for their ſwords in general could make no impreſſion upon the Roman armour.

The Gauls being defeated with great ſlaughter, and obliged to return to thoſe mountains where they had been long confined, the Romans began to look upon them as the moſt puſillanimous wretches, and at the ſame time became ſenſible of their own importance. They ſaw that nothing but art was able to conduct them through the many ſtruggles they had with their enemies, and therefore they thought it incumbent upon them to ſtudy every thing of a military nature, rather than be reputed cowards.

U. C. 388 The plebians became daily more and more inſolent, and the ſenate becoming every day jealous of the encroachments that they were

were making on the rights of the patricians, propoſed that Camillus ſhould ſtill enjoy the dictatorſhip, till ſuch time as the affair was ſettled. Popular fury, however, bore every thing down before it, as will appear from the following incident.

One day, while Camillus was ſitting in the forum, adminiſtering juſtice to the public, the tribunes of the people came in and oppoſed every thing decreed by him. Nay, they went ſo far, that they ordered the lictors to take the Dictator into cuſtody, and commit him to priſon. This was ſuch an act of indignity as had not hitherto been offered to any magiſtrate who bore the name of Dictator, and therefore the patricians flocked in numbers round Camillus, and oppoſed the lictors who came to arreſt him. In the mean time, the people were altogether in an uproar, and inſiſted that the lictors ſhould take him into cuſtody, while Camillus remained unmoved, and turning to the ſenators, told them that if peace could be concluded among the contending parties, he would build a temple to Concord as a memorial of an end having been made to all their diviſions.

The manner in which he delivered his ſentiments was agreeable to all thoſe who heard him, and a law paſſed, by which it was enacted that for the future all the tribunes ſhould be choſen from among the plebians. This law was ſoon put into execution, and Sextus, one of the moſt turbulent among the giddy multitude, was choſen one of the tribunes. At the ſame time two more magiſtrates were choſen who were called prætors, and the ediles were continued with the ſame authority as before.

Camillus having done every thing in his power to ſerve his country, he built a temple to Concord, according to his vow, and died at the age of eighty,

leaving

leaving behind him one of the moſt exalted characters that ever was met with in the world. He looked upon patriotiſm as inſeparably connected with private virtue; for he knew that thoſe who were not honeſt in their private lives, could never diſcharge the duties incumbent upon them to the public. Indeed no man can ever deſerve the name of a patriot, who is not a good huſband and a tender father. If he is good in private, he will be ſo in public.

LETTER XXVIII.

ONE would have thought, according to the ſuperſtitious notions of the people in that age, they would have paid ſome regard to the temple of Concord, and that their inteſtine diviſions would have ceaſed, but inſtead of that they were renewed with as much violence as ever. The patricians would not give up their claim, and the people inſiſted upon ſupporting what they thought their natural rights and privileges. Fraud was made uſe of in every popular election, and while their diſputes continued at home, their enemies gathered ſtrength abroad. Indeed, there was a ſort of inteſtine war between the ſenate and the people, and each were too obſtinate to give up their different pretenſions.

U. C. 398 The power of the people, however, ſeemed ſtill the moſt predominant; for they got a law enacted whereby they were intitled to the privilege of chuſing Curule ediles once in two years, and at the ſame time by a maſter-ſtroke of policy they elected Marcus Rutilius to be their Dictator. The ſenate was alarmed at this arbitrary proceeding, becauſe it ſeemed to ſtrike at the foundation of their power, and therefore they aboliſhed the

the office of conſuls as inconſiſtent with the ſafety of the commonwealth. The people, in order to be revenged on the patricians, got their Dictator elected cenſor, though not without a great ſtruggle having been made againſt it by the ſenate, who conſidered their power as thereby reduced to little more than a ſhadow.

But notwithſtanding all theſe inteſtine diviſions that threatened the ruin of the republic, yet the Romans had ſo much of the public ſpirit of their anceſtors left among them, that they ſent armies abroad, and obtained ſeveral conſiderable victories over their enemies. Some of the neighbouring ſtates had invaded the Roman territories, and among them were the Gauls, but they were defeated with great ſlaughter, and obliged to retire in the moſt wretched condition. For ſome time ſubſequent to this period, the Roman affairs continued in a very fluctuating ſtate, and a plague having almoſt depopulated the city, the moſt ſuperſtitious ceremonies were made uſe of in order to avert the vengeance of the gods, whom they imagined they had offended. Their power, however, ſeemed to increaſe in conſequence of the continual oppoſitions they met with, and while nothing but continual diſſenſions and ſuperſtitions took place in the city, their forces were victorious abroad.

Their territories were now inlarged to double what they had been before the expulſion of Tarquin, and the prieſts reigned as ſole lords of the conſciences of the people. Religion, or rather ſuperſtition, was the reigning motive that gave riſe to action, and when an opening was made in the forum the prieſts inſinuated that it was done by the gods, and therefore it could not be cloſed unleſs the moſt valuable thing in Rome was thrown into it. Upon that,

Curtius

Curtius, a noble Roman, rode into the gulph, and it closed upon him immediately, nor was he ever seen afterwards. There is not the least doubt but this was a scheme contrived by the priests, in order to establish the honour of their gods, and keep the people in subjection to them; but it shews us the power that superstition has over the human mind. It is more than probable, that it was contrived in order to make the people prefer the interests of their country to every other consideration.

This will appear evident, when we consider that in consequence of the effect that their religious rites had upon their minds, they continued to extend their conquests, and began to form such ambitious views, that nothing but the world itself could satisfy their desires. The power of the patricians was now sunk down to a mere shadow; for the people continued to encroach daily upon them in consequence of the concessions they had made to them. And such will always be the case when subjects begin to know the nature of their own importance. They had hitherto confined their views of conquest to such of the small states as lay next them, but now they resolved to turn their arms against the Samnites, a powerful body of people, who lived near the Adriatic gulph, about one hundred miles east of Rome.

These people were originally descended from the Sabines, and as they looked upon themselves as equally powerful with the Romans, so a mutual jealousy took place between them, and they considered themselves as rivals to each other. It was pretended by the Romans that the Samnites had been guilty of many acts of cruelty against their more impotent neighbours, particularly the Campani and the Sidicini; so it was demanded that they should make a public restitution. The

The Roman ſenate, upon this occaſion, acted in the moſt imprudent manner; for they refuſed to levy an army till they were perſuaded thereto by the Campanian ambaſſadors, who, in the moſt vehement terms, repreſented to them the injuries that had been done by thoſe lawleſs invaders.

After the moſt mature deliberation, the ſenate agreed to raiſe an army, and the command of it was given to Valerius and Cornelius, who were choſen conſuls.

The army was divided into two bodies, that under the command of Valerius being ſent againſt the chief towns of the Samnites, while the other under Cornelius was ordered to drive the enemy out of the country of the Campanians. This was done in the moſt judicious manner, and it ſhews, as I have already obſerved, that the people in thoſe days were far from being ignorant of the art of war. They ſhew the neceſſity of having recourſe to ſtratagem upon particular occaſions, and therefore their generals were directed to act in ſuch a manner as was conſiſtent with the dignity of the republic.

Valerius had been pronounced Corvus, in conſequence of a crow having appeared as a fortunate omen while he was engaged in a ſingle combat with one of thoſe Gauls, who, from his gigantic ſize, appeared to be in a manner a terror to all thoſe who ſaw him. This general had joined prudence to military knowledge, and while he knew how to command with a becoming dignity, he procured the reſpect of the ſoldiers who fought under his ſtandard, and ſeemed to obey him from motives of love to one whom they looked upon as the moſt accompliſhed man of the age.

The Roman army was now compoſed of the braveſt men, but, as it frequently happens, the Samnites,

nites, with whom they were under a neceſſity of engaging, were as brave as themſelves. Both were determined to carry on the conteſt to the utmoſt; for both had too much pride to ſubmit. Rome, however, deſtined to be the miſtreſs of the world, now began to ſhew what might one day be expected from the ſucceſs of her arms, and the Samnites, conſcious of their own weakneſs, fled in the utmoſt confuſion, and were killed in great numbers. In the mean time the other conſul, Cornelius, inadvertently led his men into a defile, where they were near being taken in flank, and hemmed in by the enemy, when Decius, one of the military tribunes, having come up with a new reinforcement to his aſſiſtance, a complete victory was obtained, and thirty thouſand of the Samnites were left dead on the ſpot.

The victory, however, obtained over the Samnites was not deciſive; for they ſtill continued to make depredations upon the territories of the ſtates, who were in confederacy with Rome. The inhabitants of Capua, a weak, effeminate people, who were not able to fight their own battles, requeſted that a Roman governor ſhould be placed in their chief town, in order to protect them againſt the common enemy. But this was only making things worſe; for thoſe hardy ſoldiers, who had endured all the fatigues of ſeveral tedious campaigns, no ſooner came within their walls, and began to taſte the delicacies that were every day preſented to them, than they loſt that courage peculiar to their country, and ſunk down into the moſt abject ſtate of contempt.

The place itſelf was ſo delightful, that the ſoldiers who had been placed in the garriſon, willing that their friends and relations ſhould partake of the ſame pleaſures with themſelves, ſent an invitation to all their countrymen to come and ſettle along with them.

This

This was a moſt alarming circumſtance to thoſe who wiſhed well to the intereſts of their country. They ſaw that if effeminacy took place, public virtue would be eradicated from the minds of every individual, and the intereſts of the commonwealth would be neglected, in conſequence of an attachment to things that were altogether derogatory of the character of men who aſſumed the name of rational creatures.

The officers of the army began to look upon this conduct of the ſoldiers as utterly inconſiſtent with that duty they owed to the republic, and therefore, in order to wean their minds from effeminacy, they led them out to the camp, and inured them to military diſcipline.

The relaxation, however, that had taken place among the ſoldiers made them impatient of reſtraint, and therefore, when they found themſelves obliged to obey the orders of their generals, they joined in a confederacy, and reſolved to leave the army, in order to march back to Rome.

They had no perſon, however, to take upon him the ſupreme command; for thoſe who were prudent would not engage in ſo dangerous an undertaking, and thoſe who wiſhed well to their country abhorred the thoughts of giving the leaſt countenance to anarchy and confuſion. At laſt ſome of the ſoldiers made choice of Quintius, a man far advanced in years, who had ſerved in the army during ſeveral campaigns, but was then living on the fruits of his induſtry, ariſing from the cultivation of a ſmall farm. This man was forced by their threats to take upon himſelf the ſupreme command of the army, contrary to his own natural inclination. The ſenate were alarmed in the moſt terrible manner, and therefore, in order to preſerve the public peace, they appointed Valerius Corvus dictator, with plenary

plenary power to go and act againſt them as enemies to the republic.

When the two armies were thus drawn up in order of battle, nothing was to be ſeen but one univerſal ſcene of confuſion. The plebians were divided among themſelves, and thoſe who by nature were connected by the neareſt ties of intereſt, prepared to meet each other in the moſt hoſtile manner in the field. Valerius Corvus, in this extremity, diſplayed ſuch an action of real patriotiſm, as ought to be copied by all thoſe who pretend love to their country. He drew up his men in order of battle, but then he left them, and went forward to the chief of the mutinous, whom he aſſured, in the moſt cordial manner, that he would not draw his ſword till they had drawn theirs. "You are not (ſaid he) engaged "againſt your enemies, but thoſe againſt whom "you have taken up arms are your neareſt rela-"tions, your fathers and your brothers." His ſpeech had ſuch an effect upon the conſpirators, that they all conſented to lay down their arms, and as Quintius, their general, had been forced to take the office upon him contrary to his natural inclination, ſo there was no accuſation to be preferred againſt him. By theſe lenient meaſures the flames of civil war were extinguiſhed, and the people once more reſtored to a ſtate of obedience to thoſe powers who had a right to command them, and promote the dignity of government againſt traitors of every ſort, notwithſtanding their being ſupported by popular clamour.

U C. 411. A peace having been concluded between the Romans and the Samnites, the Campanians and the Latins conſidered it as ſo diſhonourable that they took up arms, demanding ſuch conceſſions as were inconſiſtent with the dignity

nity of the Romans to grant. The ſenate, who had the intereſt of their country at heart, uſed all methods to bring their enemies over to peaceable meaſures, but as they would not harken to the voice of reaſon, an army was raiſed to oppoſe them, and a bloody battle enſued; but the regular diſcipline of the Romans, and the love they bore to their country, enabled them to obtain a complete victory. Both armies wore the ſame dreſs, and both ſpoke the ſame language, and therefore, in order to prevent confuſion, the Roman general gave orders that if any man left his ranks he ſhould be inſtantly put to death. Metius, who commanded the army of the confederates, was a man of great valour, and conſiſtent with the notions in thoſe times of ignorance, he came forward on horſeback, and challenged any one of the Romans to engage with him in ſingle combat. His challenge was accepted by Titus Manlius, ſon of the conſul of that name, who, almoſt as ſoon as they met, killed the horſe upon which his adverſary rode, and ſo brought him to the ground.

The young Roman having unhorſed his antagoniſt, continued his blows till he had diſpatched him, and then, in the midſt of the ſhouts of the army, returned in the moſt triumphant manner to his father's tent, whom he found engaged in making new diſpoſitions to attack the enemy. His father who ſeemed to be endowed with all the firmneſs of the elder Brutus, ordered his ſon to be taken into cuſtody for having preſumed to diſobey his orders, and taking him before the firſt line of the army, the lictors were commanded to ſtrike off his head. The ſoldiers beheld this act of barbarity with ſilent indignation, and they ſaw the young

hero buried with the ſpoils he had taken from the enemy.

The battle now became general, and Manlius commanded the right wing, while the left was led on by Decius. The Roman augurs had told the conſuls that they would never obtain a victory over their enemies unleſs one of the moſt dignified devoted himſelf to deſtruction for the ſervice of his country. Upon that Decius clothed himſelf in his robes, and having mounted himſelf on horſeback he ruſhed into the middle of the enemy's ranks, where he was ſoon overpowered by numbers, and killed. This heroic act of Decius ariſing from notions of ſuperſtition, encouraged the Romans to fight with ſuch bravery, that the greateſt number of the army was ſlain, and the reſt were obliged to ſubmit to the yoke of ſlavery.

The Samnites had given ſo much offence to the Romans by taking part with their enemies, that the latter reſolved to ſubdue them before their army was diſbanded.

U. C. 431. The ſucceſs of each party was various for ſome time, till at laſt the Roman ſenate having refuſed to grant peace to the Samnites, Pontius the general of the latter reſolved, if poſſible, to exert himſelf to the utmoſt, rather than ſee his country reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery. Accordingly he led his army into a place called Claudium, and at the ſame time ſent ſome of the ſoldiers in the dreſs of ſhepherds, to throw themſelves into the way of the Romans. The Romans met the diſguiſed ſoldiers, and not having any ſuſpicion of their real intentions, aſked them which way the army of the Samnites had marched. The ſpies told them that they were gone to beſiege the city of Luceria in Apulia, upon which the Romans marched

marched directly thither; but in their way found the Samnites in poſſeſſion of all the defiles, ſo that they were ſurrounded, and on the immediate brink of deſtruction. The general of the Samnites having thus got the Roman army into his power, ſent an expreſs to his father, deſiring to know in what manner he ſhould act, and received for anſwer that he muſt either make them comply with ſuch conditions as were propoſed to them, or put them all to the ſword.

Had Pontius the general of the Sabines attended to this advice of his father, and acted with moderation, he might have ſecured the peace of his country, but his temper was too violent to ſuffer him to harken to the voice of reaſon. He obliged the whole Roman army as an act of the higheſt indignity to ſtrip off their upper garments, and then obliged them as a token of ſlavery to paſs under the yoke, which exaſperated them to the higheſt degree, and filled their minds with reſentment. Theſe indignities the Romans were obliged to ſubmit to; but when they returned to the city nothing was to be ſeen but confuſion among all ranks of people, becauſe, before that time, they had never ſubmitted to any thing diſhonourable. The ſoldiers, as well as their officers, were afraid to appear in public, for ſo great was the public clamour, that they expected every moment to be torn in pieces.

It was then propoſed that a Dictator ſhould be choſen, but he not being able to do any thing towards quelling the diſſentions among the people, was obliged to reſign his office, and for ſome time Rome remained like a body without a head, there being no chief magiſtrate to give orders in what manner the laws ſhould be executed. Each party

upbraided the other; and the ſoldiers, who had been obliged to ſubmit to the higheſt indignity in conſequence of a ſnare having been laid for them, were conſidered as poor puſillanimous wretches, who had betrayed the liberties of their country.

The diſgrace however that the Romans ſuffered did not damp that martial ſpirit for which they had been ſo long celebrated, and the war with the Samnites was reſumed with equal ardour on both ſides. Succeſs in general attended the Romans, ſo that a truce was agreed upon for two years; but then the war broke out a-freſh, and the Romans were ſtill victorious. The war continued for many years, but ſtill the Romans were gaining power, and Decius, the ſon of that Decius who had devoted himſelf to deſtruction for his country, reſolved to imitate the example of his heroic father. During one of the engagements with the Samnites he mounted on horſeback, and ruſhing into the middle of the army was cut in pieces while attempting to defend the honour of his country.

The Samnites could not have ſupported the war ſo long had they not been aſſiſted by ſome of the leſſer ſtates in Italy, who were all jealous of the riſing power of the Romans, and therefore joined in one confederacy to oppoſe them. However, the Romans were ſtill victorious, ſucceſſes continued to attend their armies, and the Samnites, having loſt above two hundred thouſand of their beſt men, reſolved to call in the aſſiſtance of a foreign auxiliary to enable them to retrieve their loſt honours, and make them maſters of a people who ſeemed to aim at univerſal monarchy.

The

The perſon to whom the Samnites addreſſed themſelves in this extremity was Pyrrhus King of Epirus, a man of the moſt unbounded ambition, and perfectly acquainted with every branch of the military art. He had long aimed at univerſal monarchy, and his army was conſidered as the beſt diſciplined in that age.

Pyrrhus was glad to embrace ſo favourable an opportunity of humbling the Romans, and at the ſame time extending his conqueſts to Italy, and therefore he ſent Cineas, one of his beſt generals, and one who had ſtudied rhetorick under the famous Demoſthenes, to make incurſions into the Roman territories, at the head of three thouſand of his beſt troops. This revived the drooping ſpirits of the Samnites, and that nothing might be wanting to complete his intended conqueſt, he embarked on board a large fleet, he had raiſed for the purpoſe, twenty thouſand foot, with three thouſand horſe, and ſeveral elephants; all of which he took under his immediate command. While they were at ſea a moſt dreadful tempeſt overtook them, and many of the ſhips were deſtroyed, and all thoſe on board periſhed. Such as eſcaped arrived at Tarentum, a city near the Adriatic Gulph; but when Pyrrhus came he found the inhabitants ſunk in all ſorts of ſenſuality, ſo that he was under the neceſſity of attempting to reſtore diſcipline among them.

The Romans, who had heard of the fame of Pyrrhus, began to look upon themſelves as utterly given up for loſt, but the love of their country got the better of fear, and they raiſed a formidable army to oppoſe the common enemy. Lævinius, one of the conſuls, was ſent to conſult the ſorum, while Pyrrhus made every diſpoſition he could think

of to meet them ſo as to procure the character of an able general who had made the military art his favourite ſtudy.

Previous to the two armies meeting together, Pyrrhus ſent ambaſſadors to the Roman conſuls in order, if poſſible, to bring about a perfect reconciliation, but Lævinius told them that he deſpiſed both their army and commander, and then ordering them to be led through the ranks to look at the diſpoſition of the army, told them that they might go and tell what they had heard, and what they had ſeen to their maſter Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus had too much pride to put up with ſuch an inſolent affront, and therefore marched to meet the Romans in the moſt hoſtile manner. He encamped his army along the banks of a river which divided him from the Romans, and made every diſpoſition that a brave general could think of, in order to inſure ſucceſs. All the avenues leading to the river were guarded by detached parties of his men, while the Roman conſul, who had more courage than experience, did not attend to things of ſuch importance, but relied chiefly upon the valour of his forces.

While Pyrrhus was engaged in the heat of the battle with a party of the Romans, who had croſſed the river, the horſe upon which he rode was killed, upon which he changed armour with one of his attendants, and ſome of the Roman horſemen miſtaking the attendant for the king, ruſhed upon him and killed him. The report that Pyrrhus was killed ſoon ſpread itſelf through every part of both armies, and the Greeks were ſo ſtruck with conſternation that they began to give way, but Pyrrhus, in order to retrieve their courage, rode thro' the different ranks; and now the ſpirits of the ſoldiers being revived, they fought with redoubled courage.

courage. For ſome time the ſucceſs of the engagement continued doubtful on both ſides, for each were ſeveral times repulſed in their turn, but at laſt, Pyrrhus having ſent his elephants into the Roman line, their ranks were broken, and the legions put into the utmoſt diſorder. To improve the victory Pyrrhus ordered his horſemen to advance, and thoſe who had deſpiſed them before were obliged to retreat. The victory however was dearly obtained, for the numbers killed on each ſide were nearly equal. The Romans behaved with the greateſt bravery, and although they were defeated, yet it was with ſuch glory as will tranſmit their honour to the lateſt period of time as objects of admiration.

LETTER XXIX.

WE have now ſeen to what diſtreſs the Romans were driven by the cunning of the Greeks, but ſtill their martial ſpirit was not ſubdued, and their loſſes only ſerved to make them more acquainted with the art of war, and conſequently more qualified to extend their conqueſts. Pyrrhus in order to bring them into total ſubjection had recourſe to art, and therefore he engaged thoſe who lived in the ſouthern parts of Italy to aſſiſt him to march at the head of a large army towards Rome. The confidence he placed in Cineas was ſo great that he depended more upon his eloquence than the ſtrength or courage of his forces, and therefore he ſent him to the city in order to make the moſt flattering promiſes to the patricians, and to engage their voices in his favour by preſents. In this however he was not ſo ſucceſsful as he ex-

pected, for public virtue was ſtill the predominant principle among the Romans, notwithſtanding all their private quarrels. They told him that the love of their country was ſuperior to every thing, and therefore they treated all his pretenſions and all his offers with contempt. The patricians began to look upon virtue as ſuperior to riches, and liberty as the nobleſt enjoyment in this world; ſo that from this period we may date the riſe of the Roman grandeur, for all parties became united into one body againſt the common enemy.

Cineas finding he could not by his eloquence or bribes make any impreſſion on the people as individuals, made his addreſſes to the ſenate, and told them that his maſter had nothing ſo much at heart as that of taking the brave and courageous Romans under his protection. He ſpoke in ſo inſinuating and ſo forcible a manner, that ſome of the ſenators began to liſten to his propoſals, and probably would have concluded a moſt diſhonourable peace, had not Appius Claudius, who was now far advanced in years, and alſo blind, cauſed his ſervants to carry him in a litter into the ſenate, where he told his countrymen that they were going to betray the privileges of the city, and give up Rome to the haughty governor of a petty Grecian ſtate, after they had ſet at defiance the threats of Alexander the Great. He told them that it was much more glorious to meet Pyrrhus in the field than to make peace upon diſhonourable terms, and that if they were to ſell their liberties, it was their duty to do it at the expence of their lives. He added, that he never thought the Romans who had eſtabliſhed their power by conqueſt, would ever give it up in ſo cowardly and ſo puſillanimous a manner, ſo as to bring

to bring upon them the contempt of all the neighbouring ſtates who would not fail to treat them ever afterwards with that contempt they ſo juſtly merited.

The natural unaffected ſimplicity of the Roman had more effect on the ſenators than all the eloquence of Cineas, and therefore he found himſelf under the neceſſity of leaving Rome with this anſwer, namely, "That when Pyrrhus withdrew "his forces from Italy, and returned to his own "country, then the Romans would treat with "any ambaſſador whom he thought proper to "ſend." Cineas upon his return to the camp told Pyrrhus that the Roman ſenators were the moſt venerable men he had ever ſeen, and to confirm his teſtimony Fabricius came next day to treat with the Grecian hero about an exchange of priſoners. This Fabricius was an aged ſenator, who had been formerly one of the conſuls, and was a man of ſuch ſimplicity that his whole furniture in his houſe conſiſted of one cup made in ſo plain a manner that the bottom was only horn. The ſenate, conſcious of his many virtues, and at the ſame time ſenſible of his poverty, ordered his daughters to have portions paid them out of the treaſury of the republic, but as for himſelf he refuſed to take any thing. He told them that while he enjoyed the approbation of his countrymen, and could promote the intereſt of Rome, he could not be deſtitute of riches. Here we have the character of a real patriot, who looked upon himſelf as a ſingle individual, and his intereſt no more in compariſon with that of the public than the life or happineſs of a ſingle perſon is to that of a whole nation, or an extenſive empire.

When Fabricius arrived in the camp of Pyrrhus, all eyes were fixed upon him, and the king admiring his venerable aſpect, and reverend grey-hairs, offered to confer the utmoſt honours upon him, but he refuſed to accept of them. He then cauſed ſome of his ſoldiers to preſent one of his elephants before the ſenator, at a time when he did not expect it, thinking thereby to frighten him, but all in vain; for he remained utterly unmoved. Such an equality of temper made a deep impreſſion on the mind of Pyrrhus, and therefore he ordered all the Roman priſoners to be releaſed, upon condition that Fabricius ſhould promiſe, that if the ſenate continued the war, they ſhould be again delivered up. This was acting in an honourable manner, and conſiſtent with what we now call the law of nations, and upon the whole Pyrrhus ſhewed himſelf a moſt generous warrior.

U.C. 474. Fabricius returned to Rome in triumph with the priſoners, and Sulpicius and Decius, the conſuls, who had been defeated the former year, were appointed to take upon them the command of the army. It was a maxim with the Romans to learn the art of war from their enemies, and by theſe means they were taught to combat them with their own weapons. They had ſeen that nothing was more regular than the military diſcipline of the Greeks, and therefore they reſolved to profit by their example, by which means much of their future greatneſs was increaſed.

It was now looked upon as abſolutely neceſſary that the Roman army ſhould engage in battle with Pyrrhus, and for that purpoſe the flower of their youth were collected together, in order to ſupport the common cauſe. Accordingly both armies met near the borders of a wood adjoining to the antient city

city of Aſculum, where the Romans ſeemed to have the advantage of the ground; for it muſt be ſuppoſed that they were much better acquainted with the ſituation of their country than the Greeks. The firſt day they continued to ſkirmiſh with detached parties; for Pyrrhus could not get over ſome defiles, but next day he brought down the whole force of his elephants upon the Romans, and they were obliged to retire after they had left ſix thouſand of their men dead upon the ſpot. This victory coſt Pyrrhus very dear; for many of his men being cut off as well as his general, he began to conſider that he could not receive reinforcements from home in the ſame manner as the Romans did.

Winter approaching, the campaign was finiſhed for the ſeaſon, ſo that both armies were obliged to retire to winter quarters, reſolving to renew the war with redoubled fury as ſoon as the weather would permit. Some few ſuccours had, in the mean time, been ſent to Pyrrhus, ſo that he did not give up all for loſt, but ſtill the bravery of the Romans left him but little room to hope that ever he would ſubdue them.

Emilius, with the aged tribunes, were now made choice of as conſuls by the Romans to command the army that was to oppoſe Pyrrhus, becauſe it was ſuppoſed that the ſoldiers would fight with the greateſt alacrity under men who by their virtuous actions had acquired the greateſt ſhare of popular applauſe. Both armies approached near each other, ſo that a general engagement ſeemed inevitable; for the Romans, notwithſtanding their former defeat, were ſtill endowed with that courage peculiar to them, as the deſcendants of thoſe who had by their valour ſaved the commonwealth. But while they were preparing to engage, a meſſenger arrived from the

the perſon who attended Pyrrhus in the character of a phyſician, with a letter to Fabricius, in which he propoſed to make away with his maſter by poiſon, and ſo terminate the war.

Fabricius, as a man of real honour, treated the propoſal with the utmoſt contempt, and ſent a meſſenger to inform Pyrrhus that his life was in danger from his own domeſtics, while he was endeavouring to extend his conqueſt over a free people. Pyrrhus was not more ſtruck with the honour of the Romans than he was aſhamed of the perfidy of his own ſervants, and therefore he ordered the phyſician to be inſtantly put to death, at the ſame time ſending back to Rome all ſuch priſoners as he had taken; and made new propoſals to the ſenate, deſiring that they would agree upon articles of peace, that the flames of war might be extinguiſhed.

Nothing, however, could conquer the obſtinate ſpirit of the Romans; for glory or death was what they had in view. Pyrrhus, at this time, received an invitation to aſſiſt the Sicilians, who had been invaded by the Carthaginians, and therefore, conſiſtent with his romantic notions of honour, he placed a garriſon in the city of Tarentum, and marched to the relief of the Sicilians, not ſo much to do them ſervice as to cancel his diſgrace in Italy. The ſucceſſes that attended his arms in Sicily were but of little ſervice to the people, and after he had continued there two years, he returned to Italy at the head of a conſiderable army, which he marched to Tarentum, at that time beſieged by the Roman forces.

Some inteſtine diviſions took place at this time in Rome among the different orders of the people, but the conſuls who had the intereſt of their country at heart, ordered that all thoſe who refuſed to ſerve in the

the army, ſhould be ſold as ſlaves. This had the deſired effect, and an army being raiſed, they marched in two bodies, one againſt the Samnites, and the other againſt Lucania, one of the neighbouring ſtates. Pyrrhus did all that could be performed by a brave general, and having received information that the Romans had divided their forces, he did the ſame, but a large body of his men were ſurpriſed in a defile, owing to their not knowing the proper ſituation of the country, ſo that the Romans, after a moſt deſperate engagement, came off victorious. This brought on a general engagement, and the Romans having made balls of flax mixed with roſin, threw them into the faces of the elephants, and thoſe huge creatures retreating back, diſcompoſed their ranks, and trampled the ſoldiers under their feet. By theſe means Pyrrhus's army was totally defeated, and the conſuls returned to Rome in triumph. Pyrrhus, who pretended to much equality of temper, gathered together the remains of his ſcattered forces, and having maturely conſidered that he would never be able to ſubdue the Romans, reſolved to return to his native country. He could not, however, bear the thoughts of diſgrace, for glory was the predominant principle in his mind, and therefore he told the inhabitants of Tarentum, that he would bring them new ſuccours next year. In the mean time he embarked his men on board of ſuch ſhips as he had left; and thus ended a war that had waſted the Roman territories during the ſpace of ſix years. Fabricius endeavoured to inſpire the people with the love of frugality, and by his own example, as well as precept, he left nothing undone to baniſh luxury from among them.

At this time the Terentians invited over the Carthaginians to their aſſiſtance, but the Romans, by their military conduct and perſeverance, made themſelves maſters of their chief city, after which they levelled the walls to the ground, and made the inhabitants tributary to them. From the fate of the Terentians we may ſee what will always attend civil diſſentions, namely, the ruin of the ſtate. They had been long reſpected in Italy, but the diſturbances that aroſe among them made them an eaſy prey to every invader, for while they ſought the aſſiſtance of a foreign power, they were only endeavouring to promote their own deſtruction.

U. C. 489. Hitherto the Romans, we find, had many enemies to engage, for no ſooner had they ſubdued one than another ſtarted up. But now, by their victory over the Greeks, they acquired fame throughout every part of Italy, and thoſe people who had kept them in a ſtate of war many years, were now obliged to ſubmit to them upon what conditions they thought proper to preſcribe.

During the war with Pyrrhus, agriculture had been in a great meaſure neglected, and the people had been ſo accuſtomed to live on plunder, that they had no inclination to return to the plough. Scarcity, however, made them think of ſome means to procure the neceſſaries of life, and nothing ſeemed ſo likely to anſwer the end as their extending their conqueſts into ſome country that would be able to ſupply all their wants. A pretext was ſoon found, for many of the Carthaginians had landed on the ſouthern coaſt of Italy, and plundered the natives of their moſt valuable effects. The Romans declared war againſt them, and with a boldneſs peculiar to themſelves, began to make preparations. The city of Carthage was of greater antiquity than Rome,

Rome, and it had been firſt peopled by the Phœnicians, who had extended their conqueſts and their commerce through moſt of the iſlands in the Mediterranean, and in many other parts. It was ſituated about three miles from the place where the city of Tunis now ſtands, on the ſouth coaſt of the Mediterranean.

Their commerce made them to be looked upon as a more powerful people than the Romans, but they were not ſo in reality, for riches had deprived them of valour, and rendered their manners effeminate. All places of truſt or power were ſold to ſuch as bid moſt for them, whereas the Romans had conſtantly made ſuch honours the reward of merit. They were the moſt barbarous people that ever lived under a regular form of government; for they conſtantly offered up human ſacrifices, and they were ſo ungrateful, that nothing was more common among them than to crucify their braveſt generals when they had the misfortune to loſe a battle. From this we may learn that no two powers could be more unequally matched, and therefore the neighbouring ſtates began to form conjectures concerning the ſucceſs that would attend the Roman army. Valour, with every other military virtue, diſtinguiſhed the Romans, while the Carthaginians depended upon their riches, in hiring foreign auxiliaries to fight their battles: one of the worſt notions that was ever embraced. Such was the beginning of the Romans extending their conqueſts out of Italy, and it has always been called the firſt Punic war. The Romans had but very little knowledge of military affairs. However, nothing could depreſs their ſpirits, nor did any enterprize ſeem too hazardous for thoſe who aimed at univerſal empire.

The Carthaginians were at that time at war with the Sicilians, and the Romans immediately concluded

cluded a treaty of alliance with Hiero, king of Syracuſe, and the moſt powerful prince in Sicily. Navigation was but little known among the Romans, nor did they know how to conſtruct a ſhip in a proper manner. But ſtill good fortune attended them, and perſeverance kept up their ſpirits.

While they were deliberating on the moſt proper methods to be uſed in the making veſſels fit for tranſporting the army into Sicily, a Carthaginian ſhip happened to be wrecked near the mouth of the Tiber, and the Romans immediately ſet to work, and conſtructed no leſs than one hundred and twenty upon the ſame plan.

However, it muſt not be ſuppoſed that theſe ſhips were any more than a parcel of clumſy boats, ſuch as might do well enough in ſailing along the coaſt, but not proper to venture out to ſea. They had no ſailors, but it was not long before their men learned to row with eaſe. They were ſtill, however, very inferior to the Carthaginians; but Dullius, the conſul, who commanded this armament, contrived an inſtrument, which being fixed in the ſides of the Roman ſhips, ſtruck againſt thoſe of the Carthaginians, ſo that thoſe on board were obliged to fight ſword in hand againſt each other.

Dullius obtained ſo many victories over the Carthaginian ſhips, that the Romans treated them with the higheſt honours, and received him into the city in triumph. Regulus, another of the conſuls, had the ſame ſucceſs in Sicily, as had attended Dullius at ſea; for ſome forts were taken from the enemy, and while the Romans continued to perſevere under every trifling diſcouragement, the Carthaginians put their generals to death, becauſe they had not done what was not in their power.

At firſt the Romans imagined that they would be able to drive the Carthaginians out of Sicily, and ſo

annex

annex that fertile iſland to their other territories; but finding that ſupplies were continually ſent from Carthage, they reſolved to carry the war into Africa. Accordingly no leſs than three hundred veſſels were fitted out in order to invade the territories of the Carthaginians, and the command was given to Regulus and Manlius. Regulus had been ſo long the favourite of the people, that it would have been little better than madneſs not to have beſtowed upon him the higheſt honours. He was ſo much celebrated for the love he had for his country, that he ſeemed to have forgotten all regard for his own perſon; for nothing ſeemed to engage his attention but the glory of Rome. Every public virtue was blended in his conſtitution, and his example had a greater influence upon the ſoldiers than the moſt rigorous diſcipline.

The Roman forces, under the command of ſuch accompliſhed leaders, ſet ſail for Africa, but before they had proceeded far on their voyage, they were met by the Carthaginians, and a deſperate battle enſued, in which the Romans were ſucceſsful, and fifty-four of the enemy's ſhips were totally deſtroyed. This was the moſt remarkable naval victory the Romans had hitherto obtained, and the conſequence was, that their whole army landed ſafely in Africa, where they took the city of Clupea by ſtorm, and made twenty thouſand of the beſt Carthaginian ſoldiers priſoners of war. This ſucceſsful beginning in their firſt undertaking of that nature, inſpired them with freſh courage, and the ſenate ſent word to Regulus to proſecute the war with the utmoſt vigour. Regulus obeyed with chearfulneſs, and in his march along the banks of the river Bagrada, a moſt dreadful ſerpent, an hundred and twenty feet in length, oppoſed his paſſage for ſome time,

time, but at laſt it was deſtroyed, and the hero ſent its ſkin to Rome, to be hung up as a memorial of his courage. At laſt the army of the Carthaginians appeared, but the Romans defeated them with great ſlaughter, while the Numidians attacked them on the other ſide, ſo that nothing but confuſion and terror was to be ſeen among them. A famine raged through every part of the city, in conſequence of the peaſants having taken ſhelter in it.

The moſt accompliſhed of the Carthaginian commanders were then engaged in foreign expedition, ſo that after ſending to Regulus to beg for peace, they diſpatched meſſengers to Greece, begging the aſſiſtance of the Lacedemonians againſt the Romans. Regulus, although extremely willing to return to Italy, yet could not bear the thought of being reputed diſhonourable, and therefore he told the Carthaginians that the only terms he would grant, were, that all the Roman priſoners ſhould be delivered up without ranſom; that thoſe belonging to Carthage ſhould be ranſomed according to their different degrees, and that the Carthaginians ſhould relinquiſh whatever they had taken in Sardinia and Sicily.

The Carthaginians refuſed to comply with theſe conditions, becauſe they appeared to them in the moſt diſhonourable light; and in the mean time Xantippus, a brave Lacedemonian, arrived, to take upon him the command of their army. This general inforced the moſt rigorous diſcipline among the troops, and took the field, not doubting but that he would be able to obtain a complete victory, while Regulus continued to act on the defenſive. However, finding his army very much harraſſed by the enemy, he croſſed the river, in order to come to a general engagement. Nothing could equal the ſkill of Xantippus in the diſpoſition of the forces under

under his command; for notwithſtanding the valour of the Romans, who fought like brave men, yet they were overthrown, and the heroic Regulus was made a priſoner, after making a moſt obſtinate defence.

The Carthaginians now looked upon themſelves as delivered from their enemies, and nothing but joy was to be ſeen in the countenances of all the citizens, but their pride and ingratitude hindered them from making a proper uſe of ſo ſignal a victory. They knew that their forces had been victorious in conſequence of the ſkill and ingenuity of a foreign commander; and Xantippus, convinced of their meanneſs, deſired leave to return home to Greece. His requeſt they pretended to comply with, but when they had fitted out a ſhip to carry him acroſs the Mediterranean, they gave orders that the ſailors ſhould throw him overboard A piece of ingratitude ſcarce paralleled in hiſtory.

Such of the Roman army as had eſcaped when Regulus was taken, retreated to the city of Clupea already mentioned, where they were beſieged by the Carthaginians, and driven out of the fort. In their return to Rome, the fleet in which they were embarked met with another under the command of Karkolo; but a moſt terrible ſtorm ariſing, many of them were deſtroyed. Still the Romans were in little better than a ſtate of infancy with reſpect to their knowledge of naval affairs, and therefore they reſolved, before they made any more attempts upon Carthage, to ſubdue Sicily, becauſe it would facilitate their conqueſts. Some loſſes indeed happened to ſuch forces as had been left to protect their conqueſts in that iſland, but nothing could ſubdue the ſpirit of the Romans, for they roſe ſuperior to every loſs.

The Carthaginians, notwithſtanding the victory they had obtained, yet were deſirous of peace; for commerce

commerce was what they had moſt ſet their hearts upon. Accordingly they ſent ambaſſadors to Rome, and, to make the embaſſy the more ſolemn, Regulus, who had been confined in a dungeon four years, was ſent along with them, upon his promiſe of returning, if the conditions offered were not agreed to.

No ſooner had the Romans heard of the return of their aged general and moſt diſintereſted patriot, than they went out in crowds to meet him, but he refuſed to enter that city, telling them, that he was no more than a poor ſlave. According to the cuſtom of the Romans, the ſenators met Regulus without the walls, and it was referred to the old general to give his opinion, whether a peace ſhould be concluded or the war continued. He told them, that if they continued the war, they were in a manner ſure of conqueſt; and, to convince them of his own diſintereſtedneſs, declared his reſolution of returning a priſoner to Carthage, rather than violate his honour. Here we have an inſtance of public honour that has not been equalled by any thing we meet with in hiſtory, and it ſhould teach us, that generous ſentiments are not confined to the moſt polite nations, but are the growth of every nation, and the diſtinguiſhed ornament of every age, let the generality of the people be what they will.

LETTER XXX.

WHEN the Carthaginians heard in what manner Regulus had acted, and how he had perſuaded the ſenate to reject their propoſals, they were enraged to the higheſt degree, and they reſolved that the aged hero ſhould be tormented in ſuch a manner as is ſhocking to be mentioned.

Hell

Hell itſelf could not have invented any thing more cruel; for, being brought out of priſon, they cut off his eye-lids, and then ſent him back to his dungeon, there to remain till they ſhould invent new tortures. Their next act of cruelty was, to expoſe his mangled eyes to the heat of the ſun, and, laſtly, when they could not think of any other ſort of puniſhment, he was put into a barrel ſtuck full of nails on every ſide, and rolled about in it till he died. Here we have an inſtance of the barbarity of the Carthaginians, and humanity cannot read it without longing to hear of ſuch miſcreants being extirpated from the earth.

The Romans behaved like men who reſolved to conquer or die, and, regardleſs of their former loſſes at ſea, they fitted out a new fleet, in order to proſecute the war with the utmoſt vigour. Claudius Pulcher, one of the conſuls for the year, was ordered to take upon him the command of the fleet, but, by his ignorance of navigation, great part of the ſhips were deſtroyed, and the Romans very much diſcouraged. Perſeverance, however, enabled them to bear their loſs without ſinking into deſpair, and at the end of ſeven years a new fleet being fitted out, and command thereof given to Fabius Buteo, he took ſeveral of the enemies ſhips, and at laſt, the Romans having gathered their whole fleet together, Lutatius Catulus took upon him the command, and obtained ſuch a complete victory, that the Carthaginians were driven to deſpair, and began to beg for peace.

The Romans, however, told their ambaſſadors, that no other terms would be granted, than ſuch as had been offered by Regulus, and altho' they were extremely hard, yet they were obliged to comply. Thns ended the firſt Punic war, which, with a few intermiſſions,

intermiſſions, had continued twenty-four years, and very much weakened both parties

U.C. 513. The temple of Janus being now ſhut for the ſecond time ſince the foundation of the city, the Romans began to emerge from a ſtate of barbarity, and ſo much encouragement was given to learned men, that many came thither from Greece; and from this period we may date the origin of the Roman politeneſs. In this manner they went on, making the moſt rapid progreſs in the ſtudy of the fine arts; they ſtill thought of extending their conqueſts, for the Romans would not be ſatisfied till they could boaſt that the ſun roſe and ſet in their dominions. The Illyrians having committed ſome acts of cruelty upon the ſailors in the Roman veſſels that traded to Sicily, an ambaſſador was ſent to demand reſtitution, but, inſtead of its being granted, the queen of the country ordered him to be put to death, contrary to the law of nations, which ought to remain ſacred.

The Romans, however, chaſtiſed this act of perfidy in the ſevereſt manner, and, having ſeized the chief towns, appropriated them to themſelves, and impoſed a tribute upon the others, to be for ever paid to Rome. In that age war was looked upon as the trade of barbarians, and none took greater pleaſure in it than the Gauls. They were a moſt prolific people, and it was neceſſary for them to look out for new ſettlements. No ſooner had they heard that the Romans had commenced hoſtilities againſt the Illyrians, than thoſe barbarians, who had ſettled in Italy, ſent for ſome of their countrymen, ſtill more barbarous than themſelves, and ravaged the Roman territories, ſpreading deſolation wherever they came. The Romans were by this time perfect

fect maſters of the military art, according to the practice of thoſe days, and the Gauls, who depended upon their uſual ferocity, were defeated with the moſt dreadful ſlaughter, and no leſs than forty thouſand of them left dead on the ſpot. From this ſingle circumſtance we may learn what a vaſt difference there is between regular diſcipline, and a dependance upon perſonal ſtrength or courage. In every place where the Romans at this time engaged with the Gauls, their arms were crowned with ſucceſs, and the empire continued to enlarge itſelf upon every occaſion. The Gauls, who found that thoſe people whom they had treated with ſo much contempt, were now equal, and even ſuperior to themſelves, were obliged to ſue for peace, and they were under the neceſſity of complying with ſuch conditions as the Romans thought proper to offer.

The Carthaginians having ſent their general Hannibal over to Spain, he beſieged the antient city of Saguntum, which at that time was in alliance with the Romans, and the ſenators having diſpatched ambaſſadors to complain of this breach of public faith, all the anſwer they received was, that they might either continue in peace or renew hoſtilities. From this circumſtance we find, that all the Carthaginians had in view when they concluded peace with the Romans was, only to gain time, in order to renew the war. The meſſengers returned to Rome, and war was immediately declared by both nations.

Hannibal, the general of the Carthaginian army, was the moſt inveterate enemy the Romans ever had to oppoſe; for while he was about ten years of age, his father took him to the altar of the chief temple of Carthage, and made him ſwear by the immortal gods, that he would never conclude

peace

peace with Rome till he had brought their whole territories under ſubjection to Carthage.

Hannibal had all thoſe qualities that were neceſſary to conſtitute the character of a general in the age in which he lived, and to courage and prudence he joined the ſtricteſt temperance. The Romans indeed had repreſented him as cruel and faithleſs, but the teſtimony of an enemy will be but little regarded by any diſcerning perſons. He had been brought among a moſt barbarous people, but for all that he carried the arms of Carthage farther than ever his conſtituents thought he could have done; ſo that whatever private vices he had, yet ſtill he muſt have been a great man.

It was reaſonable to hope the greateſt things from ſuch an accompliſhed general, nor did he deceive their expectations; for, having taken Saguntum, he obliged the inhabitants to take up arms under his ſtandard, and, his army being greatly increaſed, he not only ravaged all Spain, but alſo prepared to croſs the Alps and attack the Romans in Italy. Such a reſolution was the boldeſt perhaps that ever had been formed, for whatever emigrations had been made from the Gauls acroſs the Alps in former times, yet no regular body of forces under military diſcipline had ever ventured over theſe inacceſſible mountains.

He took care to ſecure the conqueſts he had made in Spain, and leaving the government of that country to his brother Hanno, he croſſed the Pyrenian mountains, and ſoon after ravaged Gaul as far as the Rhone. Difficulties, of which he had many to encounter, added new life to Hannibal, and the more he was oppoſed by the different claſſes of people through whoſe territories he paſſed, the more

more forward he ſeemed to be, in order to accompliſh his favourite ſcheme.

It was in the depth of winter when he arrived at the ſoot of the Alpine hills, and nothing but terror preſented itſelf to his army, which then amounted in horſe and foot to near ſixty thouſand men. Rocks hanging perpendicular over their heads, wild beaſts almoſt periſhing with hunger, with a thouſand other dreadful objects, threatened them with immediate deſtruction: But nothing could intimidate the warlike Hannibal, for he encouraged his ſoldiers to go thro' with every difficulty, and, by his own example, ſhewed that he was not afraid of any danger.

The wild inhabitants of theſe almoſt inacceſſible mountains tumbled down ſhattered pieces of the rocks upon the Carthaginians, while many of them were almoſt periſhed to death with the ſeverity of the cold, but, notwithſtanding all theſe difficulties, Hannibal, at the end of nine days, arrived at the top of thoſe mountains that laid neareſt to Italy, and from thence he ſhewed them the delightful plains which they were to enjoy, as the reward of their toils.

This inſpired the ſoldiers with new courage, and after he had ſuffered them to reſt two days, he proceeded to deſcend, but ſuch quantities of ſnow had fallen, that many of his ſoldiers were deſtroyed in it, and many of them gave up all for loſt. They found their number daily decreaſing; but that which ſeemed to complete their deſpair was, their arrival at the top of a precipice, above three hundred yards in height, from whence they did not expect to meet with a paſſage. Livy, the Roman hiſtorian, who was extremely credulous, tells us, that Hannibal ordered a great number of trees to be cut

down, and, ſetting fire to them, heated the rock, and then ſoftened it with vinegar. However idle and ridiculous ſuch a ſtory may ſeem, yet it ſhews us in what eſtimation the Romans held the abilities of Hannibal, for the vinegar was patience, and the fire the courage of the commander, with a perſeverance that ſeemed peculiar to himſelf: the Carthaginians ſurmounted every difficulty, and at laſt arrived in the plains of Italy, where he found that by one misfortune and another he had loſt no leſs than one half of his men.

Within a few days after his arrival in Italy, Scipio, who had been ſent by the ſenate to oppoſe him, met him at Ticinium, and a battle enſued, in which the Romans were defeated, and their general would have been taken priſoner, had he not been reſcued by the bravery of his ſon Scipio, whoſe future adventures will make a very conſiderable figure in this hiſtory. The Gauls declared themſelves the allies of Hannibal, becauſe he would not ſuffer his ſoldiers to moleſt them, ſo that the Carthaginian army continued to encreaſe daily.

Sempronius, who had gathered together the remains of the Roman army, prepared to give battle to Hannibal, and accordingly he and the Carthaginians met together near the banks of Trebia, a river in Italy. Hannibal had taken his meaſures with ſo much prudence, that the Romans were totally defeated, and twenty-ſix thouſand left dead on the ſpot, while the reſt were obliged to ſave themſelves by flight.

Hannibal was not too much elevated with the ſucceſs that had attended his arms, nor were the Romans ſo much diſpirited as to neglect raiſing new forces, in order to recover their loſs. The Carthaginians

nians continued their march through many dangers, in order to improve their late ſucceſs, and during the cold, Hannibal, who had ſuffered as many fatigues as any of his ſoldiers, loſt one of his eyes. Flaminius, one of the conſuls, who was a raſh unthinking man, was ſent to oppoſe him, and both armies meeting together in a valley almoſt ſurrounded by mountains, the Romans were totally defeated, and Flaminius left dead on the ſpot, by a Gauliſh horſeman, who ran his ſpear through his body. Fifteen thouſand of the Romans were left dead in the field, and ten thouſand made priſoners, ſo that Hannibal obtained a complete victory.

The news of the defeat of the Roman army having been communicated to the ſenate, Fabius Maximus was choſen to command the army, and accordingly he ſet out to meet Hannibal, not ſo much with a view of coming to an immediate engagement, as to harraſs the enemy, whom he knew could not receive ſuccours ſo eaſily as the Romans.

Fabius, to all the courage neceſſary to conſtitute the character of a great general, added the moſt conſummate prudence, ſo that Hannibal found himſelf miſtaken in the notions he had formed of this antient Roman. In vain did Hannibal endeavour to force the Romans to an engagement, for Fabius, although he ſaw the country ravaged in the moſt mercileſs manner, yet he refuſed to ſtir from his camp. Hannibal had imprudently got in between two mountains, and being afraid that Fabius would take the advantage of his ſituation, had recourſe to a ſtratagem that does honour to his abilities. He commanded his men to tie faggots to the horns of two thouſand oxen, who, with the violence of the flames, ran among the centinels, and filled them

with the utmoſt conſternation, ſo that Hannibal ſecured a ſafe retreat.

The Roman ſoldiers began to murmur, but Fabius, well knowing what methods were moſt proper to be uſed, ſet out for Rome to conſult the ſenate, and left the command of the army to Minutius the maſter of the horſe, charging him not to come to a general engagement with the enemy till his return. This was a moſt prudent caution, becauſe Fabius knew that nothing was ſo likely to diſtreſs the enemy as to harraſs them in ſmall parties till ſuch time as they were ſo much weakened that they would naturally deſpair of ſucceſs.

Minutius had not prudence ſufficient to carry on the war againſt ſuch an experienced general as Hannibal, and, therefore, without paying a proper regard to the inſtructions he had received from Fabius, he marched the flower of his army down to the plain, of which Hannibal taking the advantage, placed his men in ambuſcade, and a moſt dreadful ſlaughter enſued.

While the Roman army was in this diſtreſſed ſituation, Fabius returned to the camp, and by his prudence ſaved the legions from being totally cut off. While Hannibal was acting the part of an able general, and Fabius was doing all he could to ſupport the intereſt of his country, the latter was obliged to reſign the office of dictator, and Terentius Varro, a mean wretch, who had nothing to recommend him but his riches, was made choice of by the people to ſucceed him. Paulus Æmilius, a moſt experienced commander, was joined in the ſame commiſſion with Varro, and ſoon after the two armies met, both reſolute to engage, and both earneſt of obtaining conqueſt. A moſt terrible battle enſued, in which the Roman

Roman infantry were almoſt entirely cut off. Nor was it much better with the cavalry, for ſome of the Numidian horſemen, having pretended to ſurrender themſelves priſoners of war, turned upon the Romans, and totally defeated them.

Paulus Æmilius had been wounded in the beginning of the engagement, ſo that he was not able to do any thing towards making a proper retreat, and ſoon after he died, covered with blood, leaving behing him the character of a moſt excellent commander.

This battle gained Hannibal ſo much reputation, that his army conceived the greateſt hopes of his military abilities, and they doubted not but they would ſoon be in poſſeſſion of Rome. To this Hannibal was adviſed by Manherbal, the general of his cavalry, but upon his refuſing to march immediately to Rome, Manherbal told him that he was much better qualified to fight battles than to make a proper uſe of victories. Had Hannibal marched his army to Rome, there is no doubt but the city would have been obliged to ſubmit, for all ranks of people were filled with the utmoſt conſternation. In this critical ſtate of affairs, when nothing but deſtruction ſeemed to threaten the republic, young Scipio, who had formerly ſaved his father's life, now ſtood up as the deliverer of his country. He had heard that ſome young Romans had aſſembled at a houſe near the city, where they were concerting meaſures for going over to the enemy, upon which, with ſome choſen friends, he went to the place, and, laying his hand upon his ſword, ſwore that all thoſe who wanted to leave the city were enemies to the Roman republic, and therefore rebels againſt the commonwealth.

The young men reſumed the courage peculiar to their country; and from that period the Romans began to conſider their own importance, being encouraged thereto by the augurs, who aſſured them of ſucceſs againſt the common enemy.

In the mean time, Hannibal having neglected to make a proper uſe of the ſignal victory he had obtained, the Romans prepared to take the field, and having armed all their ſlaves, the command of the forces was given to Fabius, whoſe prudence had ſhone ſo conſpicuous on many former occaſions, and to Marcellus, a general of the moſt conſummate courage, capable of engaging in every dangerous enterprize. They ſent deputies to Hannibal, offering to make peace with him, upon condition that he would depart out of Italy; but he rejected their propoſals, and led his army to the city of Capua, where they ſpent the winter in all ſorts of luxury. Many have blamed Hannibal for this part of his conduct, tho' they ought to conſider the different diſpoſitions of thoſe men who compoſed his army, and the vaſt diſtance that was between him and his native country. He had already ſurmounted innumerable difficulties, and as he had undergone a variety of hardſhips, ſo he was under an indiſpenſible obligation of acting with the utmoſt caution. Had he marched to Rome, he might have taken the city, but that was all chance-work, and had he been defeated, there was no poſſibility of his making a retreat with ſafety.

We have now followed Hannibal from Carthage through Spain, and acroſs the Alps into Italy, but he was now at the ſummit of his glory, and therefore we muſt conſider him in another light. He had done every thing he could to ſupport the intereſt of his country, and he had carried the arms

of

of Carthage almoſt to the gates of Rome; but his own countrymen, either diſtracted by factions, or ignorant of his merit, neglected to ſend him proper ſupplies. Many of thoſe who had formerly commanded the Carthaginian armies looked upon Hannibal with a jealous eye, and ſome of them entered into combinations, in order to bring about his deſtruction. By theſe means he was often reduced to ſuch difficulties that he could not pay the army, and Marcellus having defeated him in an engagement, the men under his command became dejected. To retrieve his loſs, he made a ſally out of Capua upon the Roman army, but he was defeated with great loſs, and his men became altogether mutinous His army continued to decreaſe, and as he had no probable views of procuring ſuccours, he made an attempt to march to Rome; but being oppoſed by a ſuperior force, he was obliged to abandon his enterprize, and for ſome time his affairs in the camp became more perplexed than ever. He ſunk lower and lower every day.

Aſdrubal, the brother of Hannibal, having been at laſt ſent to his aſſiſtance with a conſiderable body of forces, he began his march through Spain, but Livius and Nero, two of the Roman conſuls, cut off his retreat, by placing their men in ambuſcade, ſo that he was totally defeated. This was a fatal ſtroke to Hannibal, who had long waited with the utmoſt expectation for theſe ſupplies, but how great was his ſurprize, when he found the head of his brother that had been cut off by order of the conſul Nero, thrown into the camp. The Romans in the mean time did not loſe ſight of their own intereſt, but like true politicians, they ſent armies againſt the Carthaginians into all their remote ſettlements. Nor did they confine their arms to the oppoſition of the

Carthaginians only, for Philip, king of Macedon, having then become formidable, they went out againſt him, and beſieged the city of Syracuſe in Sicily, fortified in the ſtrongeſt manner, and the defence conducted by that great mathematician Archimedes. The Romans carried on the ſiege with the greateſt perſeverance, and at laſt the city was taken by ſtorm, notwithſtanding all the art of the learned Archimedes, who was killed by a Roman ſoldier, while he was ſtudying how to ſolve one of the moſt difficult problems in the mathematics. He was honourably buried by order of Marcellus, and his writings have made his name immortal.

In Spain the Roman affairs were attended with a variety of good and bad ſucceſs, nor did it ſeem probable that any thing deciſive would be done till young Scipio, not then above twenty-four years of age, ſtood up in defence of his country, although he ſaw nothing but difficulties and dangers before him. To all the accompliſhments that are neceſſary to conſtitute the character of a great general in war, Scipio added thoſe that muſt always make a hero of the firſt rank amiable in peace, namely, generoſity, benevolence, and every other virtue that can ennoble the heart of man.

New Carthage, a city in Spain, had ſubmitted to his victorious arms, and among the priſoners was a young princeſs, who had been promiſed in marriage to Allecucius, a young prince of the ſame country, who loved her in the moſt paſſionate manner. The young prince was ſummoned to appear before Scipio, and he doubted not but it was done in order that he might take his laſt farewell of all that was dear to him in the world; but how great was his ſuprize, when the conqueror deſired him to take his

his bride along with him, and remain for the future on good terms with the Romans. By acts of ſuch diſintereſted generoſity, he endeared himſelf to all thoſe who attended him in the camp, and ſuch as became his captives thought it rather an honour than a diſgrace, to be ſubject to ſo generous a conqueror.

While the war was carried on in this manner in Spain, Hannibal did all he could to ſupport the intereſt of his country, and to diſtreſs the Romans; but his army was ſo much exhauſted, that he had nothing to ſupport him but an empty name. In the mean time Scipio returned to Rome, crowned with military glory, and was made conſul, although he was only in the twenty-ninth year of his age, a circumſtance that had never before taken place in the Roman republic.

The eyes of the citizens were fixed upon him, and they doubted not but he would immediately march againſt Hannibal, the common enemy of their country; but he had formed a more noble deſign, namely, to carry the Roman forces into Africa, and attack the Carthaginians in their own territories. Many oppoſitions were made to this meaſure in the ſenate, becauſe it appeared to them altogether chimerical, and Fabius, in particular, gave his opinion againſt it: but at laſt the reaſons urged by Scipio appeared to them ſo convincing that Sicily was aſſigned him as a province, and there he gave the greateſt proofs of his military knowledge. He continued in Sicily one year, and then, having received an invitation from Maſſiniſſa, king of the Numidians, who had been depoſed by the Carthaginians, he propoſed to ſet out for Africa.

Soon after Scipio arrived in Africa, he defeated and ſlew Hanno in battle; and Syphax, the uſurper of Numidia, having oppoſed him with a great force, the Roman general obtained a complete victory, and Syphax was taken priſoner. By this, Maſſiniſſa was now enabled to take poſſeſſion of the kingdom, to which he had an hereditary right, and therefore he marched to the capital city, carrying Syphax along with him as a priſoner. The gates were ſet open to him, and beſides a great quantity of treaſure Maſſiniſſa found the beloved wife of Syphax, namely, Sophoniſba, the daughter of Aſdrubal, one of the Carthaginian generals. The amiable young queen fell upon her knees, and begged that ſhe might not be delivered up to the Romans, becauſe ſhe had ſpirited up her countrymen againſt them. She had no reaſon to expect any favour, and therefore ſhe hung by the knees of the conqueror, begging for mercy with all the eloquence of beauty in diſtreſs. Scipio was informed of the conduct of Maſſiniſſa, and therefore, in order to do juſtice to all the parties concerned, he declared that Syphax was the priſoner of Rome, and that he muſt attend the ſenate along with his queen, who was alſo a priſoner. This put an end to the preſent controverſy, but the conſequences attending it will be the ſubject of my next letter.

LETTER XXXI.

WHEN Maſſiniſſa found that he had no view of procuring poſſeſſion of the beloved object, he ſent one of his ſlaves to the queen with a bowl of poiſon, which ſhe drank off, and then died in the moſt tranquil manner.

The

The Carthaginians finding the flames of war lighted up within their continental territories, ſent meſſengers to Hannibal, in order to deſire that he would immediately return out of Italy. Hannibal received the orders with the utmoſt ſubmiſſion, and after being fifteen years in Italy, took leave of it with tears in his eyes, and then returned to Africa.

Soon after he had croſſed the Mediterranean, he muſtered together as many forces as he could raiſe, and reſolved to meet Scipio. The Roman general had taken the utmoſt precaution againſt any ſnares that might be laid for him, and at the ſame time he had brought his forces under the ſtricteſt diſcipline. Hannibal, on the other hand, had an army compoſed of people from different nations, ſo that it was not an eaſy matter to make them obedient to their officers, and therefore Hannibal reſolved to enter into a negotiation with Scipio. At laſt, after ſeveral meſſages had paſſed between them, the two generals met at a place appointed. Scipio was in all the vigour of youth, and he had ſomething in his countenance that charmed all who ſaw him, while Hannibal appeared to have been worn out with the fatigues of a long and expenſive war.

Hannibal ſpoke in the moſt moderate manner, and inſiſted that it was the intereſt of both nations to have recourſe to the moſt lenient meaſures. Scipio anſwered, that the war had been begun by the Carthaginians, in violation of the moſt ſolemn treaties, and therefore he could not conſent to make peace, unleſs proper reparation was firſt made for the damages that had been done to the Roman commonwealth.

Nothing being concluded upon, the two generals parted, reſolving to put the general iſſue upon the conſequences

conſequences of a battle. Hannibal left nothing undone to encourage his men to fight in the moſt courageous manner, and Scipio told his legions, that now they had but one puſh more before they made an end of the war. At laſt both armies met, and a moſt bloody battle enſued, in which the Romans were victorious, though they obtained it at a great loſs of men. Hannibal, with the remains of his army, took ſhelter in Adrumetum, after he had done all that he could to ſupport the intereſt of his country. The Carthaginians were now obliged to accept peace upon any condition the Romans thought proper to preſcribe, and peace was granted in conſequence of their promiſing to evacuate all the conqueſts they had made in Spain and in the iſlands of the Mediterranean. They were alſo to give hoſtages for the performance of the treaty, nor were they to make war, even in Africa, without the permiſſion of the Roman ſenate, to whom they were in a manner now ſubject.

The ſecond Punic war was now ended, after it had continued ſeventeen years, ſo that for ſome time the Romans enjoyed peace.

U. C. 553. The vaſt ſucceſs that had hitherto attended the Roman arms taught the people to ſeek out for new conqueſts, in order to enrich their country; and for that purpoſe it was reſolved on in the ſenate, that the war againſt Philip, king of Macedon, ſhould be carried on with more vigour than ever. An army under the command of the conſul Galba was ſent to protect Athens from the depredations made upon its territories by the Macedonians, and Philip was defeated in ſeveral engagements.

Philip was obliged to ſue for peace, which was granted him, upon condition that he ſhould pay a certain

certain ſum of money, and return to his own country. The Romans now began to make a more conſpicuous figure than ever, for they had begun to learn politeneſs from the Greeks. In return, they took care to procure peace for the Greeks, and ſent a deputation of the ſenate to wait on the Athenians, in order to acknowledge, with gratitude, the favours that they had received from them.

Thus ended the firſt war between the Romans and Macedonians, without having produced any very beneficial conſequences to either party, but the Romans had in the mean time obtained ſeveral victories over the Gauls, who had taken up arms againſt them by the inſtigation of the Carthaginian general Hannibal. U. C. 558.

From this period the power of the Romans began to advance in ſo rapid a manner, that they reſolved to ſend armies againſt all thoſe who oppoſed them, let their ſituation be ever ſo far diſtant. New pretences were daily found out for declaring a freſh war, and Antiochus, king of Syria, having made ſome encroachments on the Grecian territories, and taken the brave Hannibal under his protection, after he had been baniſhed from Carthage, it was reſolved in the ſenate to declare war againſt him.

While he was indulging himſelf in this vain manner, inconſiſtent with his dignity as a ſovereign, the Roman army approached, and Antiochus found himſelf under the neceſſity of ſuing for peace, but his propoſals were rejected with contempt. He was now driven to the laſt extremity, and although Hannibal commanded his navy as admiral, yet the Romans defeated them, and Scipio, the brother of the famous Scipio Africanus, croſſed the Helleſpont with a great army, without meeting with the leaſt oppoſition, although a handful of men might have deſtroyed

deſtroyed his whole fleet. Antiochus, ſtill deſirous to obtain peace, even on the moſt humble conditions, offered to diſengage himſelf from any connections with ſuch princes in Aſia as were enemies to the Romans, but Scipio rejected his propoſals, ſo that he ſaw no other expedient left, but that of entering upon a general engagement, let the conſequences be what they would.

Antiochus did all he could to oppoſe the progreſs of the Roman arms, but at laſt he was defeated, and obliged to beg for peace in the moſt abject manner, and to ſubmit to any conditions the Romans thought proper to propoſe; which were, that he ſhould relinquiſh all the conqueſts he had made, and content himſelf with Syria alone. It was alſo agreed, that Hannibal ſhould be given up to the Romans; but that brave general, finding that he was devoted to deſtruction, reſolved to return to Carthage, where he had been treated in the moſt ungrateful manner. He had ſtill ſome hopes of bringing his countrymen back to a ſenſe of their duty, and for that reaſon he propoſed, that all thoſe who had embezzled the public money ſhould be brought to an account for their conduct. This created him many enemies, and the Carthaginians accuſed him to the Romans as one who wanted to renew the war, after they had entered into the moſt ſolemn treaties of peace. The brave, though injured Hannibal, finding that he had no reaſon to expect any favour from his ungrateful countrymen, left the city, and, after ſpending ſome time in a voluntary exile, he ſet out for Tyre, where he was kindly received; for the Carthaginians were originally a colony from that republic.

He did not, however, remain long in Tyre, for, leaving that city, he ſet out once more for the court of

of Antiochus, where he was received with great reſpect, and appointed commander or admiral of his fleet. He adviſed Antiochus to make a ſecond attempt againſt the Romans; but that prince being of a fearful diſpoſition, rejected his propoſals, and Hannibal withdrew from his ſervice in the moſt private manner. He wandered for ſome time in the moſt diſconſolate condition, without a friend to aid or aſſiſt him, till he came to the court of Pruſius, king of Bythinia, where he had not been long, when the Romans ſent Emilius, one of their generals, to demand him. Pruſius dreaded the Roman power, and therefore, in order to make peace with them on the moſt advantageous terms, he reſolved to give up the brave aged general, who had done ſo much for the ſervice of his country. When news of this was brought to Hannibal, he took out of his pocket a doſe of poiſon, and, having ſwallowed it, died ſoon after, leaving behind him the character of one of the greateſt generals that ever commanded an army. The unrelenting manner in which the Romans purſued this great man has left an indelible ſtain upon their character, and will tranſmit their name with infamy to the lateſt ages of poſterity.

We have already obſerved what ſervices Scipio Africanus had done to the Romans; but notwithſtanding all that, ſoon after his return home from the war with Antiochus, where he had acted as lieutenant under his brother, he was accuſed by the tribunes of the people of having embezzled a great part of the plunder that had been taken from the enemy. They ſummoned him to appear in the forum; but he having there treated them with the utmoſt contempt, they followed him to the ſenate, and as he knew that they would ſhew him no favour,

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nor even ſuffer him to make his defence, he left his native country, and ſoon afterwards died in exile, much about the ſame time that Hannibal drank the doſe of poiſon.

Such was the end of two great men, both of whom had done every thing in their power to ſerve their reſpective countries, and both had been treated in the moſt ungrateful manner. Scipio, as a man, was mild, eaſy, affable, and engaging; and as a commander in the field, none was more ready to encounter the greateſt hardſhips. Hannibal had all thoſe qualities that are in a manner neceſſary to conſtitute the character of a great hero; and altho' ſome of the Roman authors have accuſed him of cruelty, yet we muſt remember, that the accuſation itſelf is only ſupported by the evidence of his enemies.

U.C. 583. The death of Hannibal, and the ungrateful manner in which Scipio had been treated, did not put an end to the domeſtic diſſentions in Rome; for the people ſeemed to prefer faction to all the benefits that ariſe from a ſtate of tranquillity. In the mean time, Perſeus, king of Macedon, made war upon the Romans, but he was defeated by Æmilius, and taken priſoner to Rome, in the moſt ſolemn manner, as a teſtimony of the reſpect the people paid to their general, who had thus ſubdued ſo formidable an enemy.

The Romans, flushed with ſucceſs, and enriched by plunder, could ſet no bounds to their ambition, and therefore they reſolved to enter upon a third Punic war againſt the Carthaginians, who were in a manner half-ſubdued already. Cato, the cenſor, was ſent to Carthage, to complain of ſome infringments of the late treaty of peace; and finding the city in a rich flouriſhing condition, he returned to Rome,

Rome, and, in the ſenate, inſiſted that a new war ſhould be commenced. Some oppoſition was made in the ſenate to his propoſal, but the popular party being on his ſide, he carried his point, and war was proclaimed in the ordinary form, without any other reaſons, ſave what aroſe from motives of avarice and ambition among a free people, who could never be content unleſs they were engaged in hoſtilities.

The deſtruction of Carthage ſeemed now inevitable; for military diſcipline had been neglected throughout all their provinces, while the Romans were making daily improvements. Hannibal was dead, and they had not a general of any real merit on whom they could beſtow the command of their army; nor would it have been an eaſy matter to find one, becauſe of the baſe, ungenerous manner in which they always treated thoſe who did them the greateſt ſervices.

Haughty in proſperity, and mean in adverſity, the Carthaginians complied with the moſt mortifying terms that the Roman ſenate could preſcribe. Deputies were ſent from Rome to Africa, and they were met at Utica, by meſſengers from Carthage, who came there to receive laws and orders from their victorious neighbours. The Carthaginians were ſo mean as to deliver up their arms, and then they were told by the deputies from the ſenate, that they muſt remove from their city, for they had orders to level it with the ground. Theſe mortifying conditions they were obliged to comply with; but upon their return, being filled with indignation, the ſpirit of their anceſtors began to operate on their minds, and they reſolved to ſell their lives and liberties as dear as poſſible, rather than be domineered over by the Romans.

It was now that the Carthaginians began to ſee their folly, in having been ſo ungrateful to thoſe who had ſought to promote their intereſt, and therefore Aſdrubal, who had been thrown into priſon becauſe he adviſed them to take up arms againſt the Romans, was ſet at liberty. Aſdrubal put the army into the beſt order he could, and at the ſame time did all in his power to diſcourage luxury, which had enervated the vigour of the people, and made them altogether effeminate.

In the mean time the Roman army approached near the walls of Carthage, and ſeveral battles were fought with various ſucceſs on both ſides, till Scipio Æmilius, the adopted ſon of Scipio Africanus, corrupted Pharneus, the general of the Carthaginian horſe, and brought him over to his party. Breaches were made in the walls by the Romans, but the Carthaginians, with the moſt incredible induſtry, made a ſally, and having marched a great number of their men out into the fields, they attacked the Romans in flank, ſo that they were obliged to turn their armies two different ways. Nothing, however, could damp the ſpirit of the Romans; for Scipio went out in ſuch a courageous manner, that he killed above ſixty thouſand of the enemy, and took a great number of priſoners, while the people in the city were reduced to the laſt extremity, and deſtitute of almoſt all the neceſſaries of life.

The defence made by the Carthaginians was more brave than could have been expected from people who had been long ſunk in all manner of luxury; but the regularity of the Roman diſcipline ſurmounted every obſtacle, and at laſt every thing gave way to them but the temple. That edifice, which was looked upon as ſacred, was fortified in the ſtrongeſt manner, and thither retreated ſuch of the

the Roman ſoldiers as had deſerted from the army. As theſe men had no rea on to expect any favour, ſo they reſolved to ſell their lives as dear as poſſible. Accordingly, they ſet fire to the temple, and all periſhed in the flames. The wife of Aſdrubal, who had ſurrendered herſelf a priſoner to the Romans, ruſhed into the flames along with her children, and periſhed in that place, where ſhe had often offered up ſacrifices to the gods. The conflagration, by which this great city was deſtroyed, continued ſeventeen days, but at laſt it was reduced to aſhes, and all the other towns in their dominions ſhared the ſame fate. Such of the people as had been moſt active in oppoſing the Romans, were crucified, and all the others were ſold as ſlaves.

Such was the end of Carthage, after it had reigned queen of the commercial world many years; but even thoſe riches, by which it was raiſed to grandeur, proved its ruin; for affluence ſunk them into effeminacy, and riches produced puſillanimity.

The ſucceſs that the Romans had over the Carthaginians only ſerved to ſtimulate them on to greater actions, and therefore, ſoon after, they beſieged and took the city of Corinth in the Leſſer Aſia, on pretence that the people had taken up arms againſt the Lacedæmonians, who were then on terms of friendſhip with the Romans. In Spain, the war was carried on with the greateſt vigour, and the Romans, partly by fraud, and partly by the regularity of their diſcipline, ſubdued all thoſe who ſtood up againſt them. Not that the victory was ſo eaſily obtained; for the Spaniards diſputed their liberties to the laſt, and the nhabitants of Numantia, a ſtrong city, rather than give up their liberties, ſet fire to their houſes, and voluntarily periſhed in the flames.

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From this time till the declenſion of the empire, Spain became a province to Rome, and the people were reduced to a ſtate of the moſt abject ſubjection. The Romans now ſeemed to act inconſiſtent with the character of their anceſtors; for generoſity ſeemed to have fled from them. Cruelty to all thoſe whom they brought under their ſubjection was the predominant principle in their mind; the people were oppreſſed in the moſt cruel manner: a prætor was ſent to dictate what laws he pleaſed, and a quæſtor was appointed to collect ſuch taxes as were impoſed, in the moſt cruel and illegal manner.

The Roman power was now greatly increaſed, but their ambition was not ſatisfied, for nothing could ſtop them in their adventures, till their ſenators, like an unweildy body, became too unweildy for the head, and, in conſequence thereof, fell into a ſtate of confuſion. The ſpoils brought from Aſia increaſed a taſte for luxury, and the people ſeemed to have loſt the martial ſpirit of their anceſtors, while at the ſame time their ambition was unbounded.

While they were going on in this thoughtleſs, diſſipated manner, the two conſular generals in the army ſtood up, in order to bring about a reformation in the city. They ſaw the effect of luxury, and they doubted not but in the end it would involve the whole commonwealth in ruin. This induced them to make a propoſal that the Licinian law ſhould be put in full force, by which it had been enacted, that no perſon ſhould be allowed to poſſeſs more than five hundred acres of land. Tiberius Gracchus, the elder of the two brothers, had long been the favourite of the people, and although he had many virtues, yet they were in a manner obſcured by an equal number of vices, ſo that it was difficult to ſay whether he was a great man, intitled

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to the approbation of the people, or one who wanted to trample on their liberties.

This man had ſuch intereſt with the citizens, that he was made choice of to be one of the tribunes of the people, and for ſome time popularity ſeemed to be the motive that directed him in the whole of his conduct. The people became every day more and more fond of their new tribune; for while he endeavoured to depreſs the power of the patricians, he did all he could to ſupport the plebians in their tumultuous meetings.

About this time Attalus, king of Pergamus, died, and having left all his perſonal eſtate to the Romans, it was inſiſted on by the tribunes, in the name of the people, that it ſhould be divided among ſuch as were in neceſſitous circumſtances. Gracchus exerted the utmoſt efforts of eloquence, in order to bring over the populace to his party, ſo that for ſome time nothing was to be ſeen in Rome but confuſion. Inteſtine diviſions call forth great men to action, and while the ſenate were debating on the moſt proper means to be uſed in order to quiet the clamours of the people, Scipio Naſica roſe up in the moſt heroic manner, and deſired all thoſe who had ſpirit and courage to ſupport the rights of their fellow citizens, to follow him.

Accordingly ſuch of the ſenate and the patricians as had the Roman ſpirit remaining in them, ſallied forth in a body, in order to diſperſe the plebians; but Gracchus, who thought to ſave himſelf by flight, was killed in the tumult along with three hundred of his confederates, while ſuch as were made priſoners were puniſhed in the moſt cruel manner, ſo that the ſenate ſeemed to reign triumphant over the liberties of the people. In the mean time the Romans continued to ſend armies abroad,

abroad, and having defeated Ariſtonicus, the pretended king of Pergamus, he was taken priſoner, and, by order of the ſenate, ſtrangled to death.

Caius Gracchus, the brother of Tiberius, was only a young man, but he had very great abilities. He had lived ſome time in a ſtate of obſcurity, but merit brought him forth to public action, and he was appointed quæſtor of the army that was ſent againſt the Sardinians. A preſent of corn having been ſent to Rome by the king of Numidia, as a reward for the many virtues of Caius Gracchus, it was rejected, and the ambaſſadors treated with the utmoſt contempt. News of this having been tranſmitted to Gracchus, he returned to Rome in order to vindicate his own conduct, and he was, by the unanimous conſent of the citizens, choſen tribune of the people.

Thus Caius Gracchus imbibed all the ſpirit of his brother Tiberius, and therefore, in order to convince the people that he was not unacquainted with the nature of that power they had intruſted him with, he ordered that Pompilius, one of his brother's enemies, ſhould be ſummoned to make his appearance in the forum; but, through the conſciouſneſs of his guilt, he left the city, and went into voluntary exile. Popularity was the motive that ſeemed to give life to all his actions, for he got a decree to paſs the ſenate, by which all thoſe who lived between Rome and the Alps, ſhould be made free citizens. Corn was ordered to be ſold at a moderate price, and knights were appointed to inſpect into the conduct of the ſenators, who had greatly abuſed their power.

Theſe men, honoured with the name of knights, were at firſt no more than three hundred in number, and at the ſame time they were all the friends and partizans

partizans of Gracchus, ſo that they were wholly under his direction. However, the public good ſeemed to be his ruling principle, for he ordered the highways to be kept in proper repair, and ſuch corn as had been taken from the enemy was ſold to the people at a moderate price, and the overplus remitted back to the proprietors.

LETTER XXXII.

WE have ſeen in what manner Gracchus acquired popularity, and it muſt be acknowledged that he was endowed with talents for retaining it. But ſtill he was not without his enemies, for the higher he roſe in the opinion of the people, the more odious he became to the ſenate. They were obliged, however, to wait till the expiration of his tribuneſhip, when they intended to wreak their vengeance upon him; but, to their great ſurprize, he was elected a ſecond time, without having ſolicited ſo much as one vote.

It is not a very difficult matter to acquire popularity on ſome occaſions, but to retain it long ſeldom falls to the lot of man. The ſenate, who found they could not by open means bring Gracchus into diſgrace, reſolved to have recourſe to art, and, if poſſible, defeat him with his own weapons. They got Druſus to be choſen his colleague in office, and it was not long before his popularity began to make the moſt diſtinguiſhing figure. Gracchus was fired with jealouſy, but he was daily loſing ground with thoſe who had formerly admired his talents, and raiſed him to the ſummit of grandeur.

He had uſed ſome ſeverities in inforcing the Licinian law, and therefore ſuch as were in poſſeſſion of

of great landed eſtates, ſolicited the aſſiſtance of the younger Scipio Africanus, who in ſentiment was an enemy to Gracchus. Scipio was endowed with too much prudence to do any thing raſhly, but reſolved to wait with patience till ſuch time as things could be brought about in a regular manner without violence.

Tuditanus, a plebian, was added to the triumvirate, or thoſe officers who had the diſpoſal of the land, but he did not act with that vigour which the ſenate expected from him. The conduct of Scipio, in meddling with popular affairs, haſtened his death, for the tribunes having ſummoned him to appear in the forum, in order to anſwer to ſome charges that were to be exhibited againſt him, he went home to his houſe in diſguſt, and next morning was found ſtrangled in bed. Moſt of the ſenators imagined that Gracchus had precipitated the fate of this great man; but as he knew that there was no legal proof of his guilt, he refuſed to anſwer for his conduct; and, to regain his popularity, propoſed that the city of Carthage ſhould be rebuilt, and a colony ſent from Rome to inhabit it, of ſuch as choſe to go and ſettle in Africa.

In this he was ſtrongly ſeconded by ſuch of the citizens as loved commerce, but ſuperſtition fruſtrated the deſign; for no ſooner was the war begun, than the people were frightened by omens, and Gracchus, who had many enemies in Rome, ſaw himſelf under the neceſſity of returning to that city. He now found that all his popularity was vaniſhing like ſmoke, for the plebians, ever fickle in their notions, transferred all their reſpect to Druſus, and when the election for tribunes came on, Gracchus was thrown out by a great majority.

Gracchus

Gracchus being thus reduced to a private ſtation, the ſenate reſolved to wreak all their vengeance upon him, and for that purport employed his mortal enemy, Optimius, to ſummon him before the general aſſembly of the people. In the mean time, a general inſurrection happened in Rome between the contending parties, and ſeveral perſons having been killed, Gracchus was obliged to retire, in order to provide for his own ſafety. Some of his former friends ſtill adhered to him, but nothing could bring over the ſenate to his intereſt, it being their fixed reſolution to purſue him with unrelenting malice, becauſe, while he was in office, he had forced many of them to part with their lands.

During the inſurrection, one of the lictors had been killed by a citizen belonging to the party of Gracchus, and his enemies, in order to encreaſe the public clamour, had cauſed his dead body to be carried thro' the ſtreets. The conſuls ſummoned all the nobles to take up arms, and to appear, attended by their ſlaves, on Mount Aventine the next morning.

In the mean time, Flaccus, the friend of Gracchus, did all in his power to draw his partizans together, but he had many and great difficulties to encounter. Gracchus ſoon found that he was devoted to deſtruction, for he learned, that a proclamation had been iſſued by the conſuls, offering a reward of its weight in gold for his head. He found that he was too weak to engage with the patrician party, and therefore he ſent one Flaccus, a young boy, with terms of peace to the conſuls, but all his offers were rejected with contempt, for nothing would ſatisfy them, unleſs they could procure his death. He then ſent young Flaccus a ſecond time to the conſuls and the ſenate, but Optimius ordered

him to be committed to priſon, and then marching with his army up to the Aventine hills, fell upon the remaining forces of Gracchus, and a moſt dreadful ſlaughter enſued, three thouſand being left dead on the ſpot.

Flaccus, with his ſon, were both ſlain ſoon after the battle, and Gracchus having taken ſhelter in the temple of Diana, was there diſcovered by one of his friends, who adviſed him to ſave his life by flight. He accordingly left the temple, and, accompanied by his two friends and a Grecian ſlave, advanced till he came near a bridge, where he found himſelf again beſet by his enemies. This obliged him to turn upon them, and after his two friends were killed, he and his ſlave made their eſcape to a grove near the banks of the Tiber. Here they had not remained long, when the enemy diſcovered them, and Gracchus, finding no hopes left of making his eſcape, prevailed upon his ſlave to kill him, who did ſo, and then killed himſelf. The dead body of Gracchus being found, the ſoldiers cut off the head, and expoſed it upon a poll, after which they took out the brains, and filled the cavity with lead, ſo that they received ſeventeen pounds weight of ſilver from the conſuls.

Such was the end of one of the greateſt men that Rome ever produced, for his heart burned with love to his country. Every ſcheme projected by him was to promote the intereſts of his country, by making the Romans happy at home and reſpectable abroad.

Hiſtorians, who are friends to deſpotiſm, and enemies to the natural rights of mankind, have repreſented him as one who ſought to promote faction in the ſtate, while the friends of liberty have always conſidered him as the father of his country.

country. The Roman ſenate in his time were become a body of arbitrary tyrants, who ſought to eſtabliſh their own grandeur on the ruin of the commonwealth, and therefore there is no wonder they ſhould look with abhorrence upon a man who ſtood up in oppoſition to their encroachments. Private virtue was now at a low ebb among the Romans, and the ſenators ſeemed to have forgot all thoſe obligations they were under to promote the intereſts of their country. Such of the citizens as were advanced to be the ſenators, were conſidered by the more ſober and thinking, as the meaneſt tools of a corrupt adminiſtration; for they had utterly loſt the confidence of the people. From this period an ariſtocracy took place, much more dangerous than when the ſovereignty is lodged in the hands of one man, for inſtead of one tyrant they were obliged to ſubmit to above three hundred. Thus the abuſe of power always leads to revolutions in the government; for it ſignifies but little who are the governors, ſo as the people are to be oppreſſed.

In this ſtate of the Roman republic, when virtue ſeemed to have been baniſhed from the generality of all ranks of people, and when the ſenate ſeemed to ſeek nothing but the aggrandizing of themſelves, yet their armies had great ſucceſs abroad. Liberty ſeemed to be extinguiſhing at home, while new territories were daily added to enlarge the bounds of their empire. All that country now called Savoy, with ſeveral territories in Greece, were now totally ſubdued, and many of the iſlands in the Mediterranean ſubmitted to the victorious conquerors. But that which principally claims our attention in this place U. C. 634.

is, the war carried on by the Romans againſt Jugurtha, king of Numidia, grandſon to Maſſiniſſa, already mentioned in the account of Carthage.

Jugurtha had two brothers, one of whom he procured to be murdered, and the other, finding that he was likely to ſhare the ſame fate, fled to Rome, in order to ſolicit protection from the ſenate. But although he had now aſſumed the reins of government in Numidia, yet he was not acquainted with the ſtate of affairs at Rome, and as he knew the ſenators to be of a mean mercenary diſpoſition, he ſent ambaſſadors to them with valuable preſents, upon which the ſenate ordered that he ſhould relinquiſh one half of the kingdom in favour of his brother Adherbal.

Jugurtha, who could not bear the thoughts of a rival, diſſembled his reſentment, but as ſoon as Optimius and the other Roman commiſſioners were gone, he took up arms, and having defeated his brother Adherbal, the latter took refuge in the city of Cirta, but there he was taken and murdered in the moſt inhuman manner. An account of this act of injuſtice having been tranſmitted to Rome, the people looked upon it with the utmoſt abhorrence, but the ſenate, who, in conſequence of the bribes they had received, were parties concerned, ſeemed very backward in commencing hoſtilities. The public clamour, however, was ſo great, that they were obliged to ſend one of the conſuls thither with a conſiderable army, but avarice being his reigning principle, he accepted of a bribe, and propoſed to make peace with Jugurtha. This only ſerved to encreaſe the public clamour: and Jugurtha, as a prince tributary to Rome, was ſummoned to appear before the people, in order to anſwer

anſwer for his conduct. Accordingly he did ſo, but his rich preſents procured him many friends, for when he was going to give an account of the manner in which he had bribed the ſenate, Bebius, one of the tribunes, whom he had alſo corrupted, ordered him not to ſpeak one word more on the ſubject.

LETTER XXXIII.

THE people of Rome ſeem to have had more elevated notions concerning the faith of treaties than the ſenators, whoſe knowledge and experience gave them more opportunities. They inſiſted that Jugurtha ſhould depart from the city, and accordingly he returned again to Numidia. He looked upon the Roman ſenate with the moſt ineffable contempt, and often ſaid that if a perſon was only rich enough, he might purchaſe the whole of their territories.

The Romans, although they had diſmiſſed Jugurtha, yet ſent an army to invade his dominions, under the command of Albanus, one of the conſuls; and Jugurtha finding himſelf unable to keep his ground had recourſe to intrigue and negociation. Albanus the conſul being obliged to return to Rome he left the command of the army to his brother Aulus; but Jugurtha had too much cunning not to lay ſnares for the moſt accompliſhed general in the univerſe. Aulus attacked Suthul, the town where the treaſure of Jugurtha was contained, but his army was led into a ſnare, and he was obliged to ſubmit to the moſt diſhonourable terms.

To retrieve the diſgrace of the Romans, Metellus, one of the conſuls, was ſent to Numidia, and by his good conduct the army was brought under proper diſcipline, and in the ſpace of two years drove Jugurtha out of Numidia. He then ſued for peace, but Metellus propoſed to him the moſt humiliating terms. He inſiſted that he ſhould defray all the expences of the war. That he ſhould pay two hundred thouſand pounds weight of ſilver, that his elephants and arms, with all the Roman deſerters, ſhould be delivered up, all which Jugurtha was obliged to comply with.

Metellus, having thus humbled the haughty Numidian, inſiſted that he ſhould deliver himſelf up as a priſoner, and ſubmit to a trial at Rome. Conſcious of his guilt, he refuſed to comply, and the war was again renewed; but ſtill the Romans ſucceeded. Metellus returning to Rome to deliver up his commiſſion as conſul, the command of the army was given to Caius Marius, a man of the moſt undaunted courage, and uſed to every hardſhip, for his father was only a peaſant, ſo that he had been brought up to all the drudgery of the plough. He had riſen through all the inferior offices by his merit, for he lived in the ſame manner as the private ſoldiers, and taught them temperance by his own example. But to all theſe virtues he joined the moſt unbounded ambition, and by his intrigues he got himſelf elected conſul in the room of Vitellus; ſo that he now had the ſovereign power of conducting the war, and of reaping the glories that Metellus had almoſt atchieved.

The courage of Caius Marius ſoon made a more conſpicuous figure than it had hitherto done. It is true the Numidians one night ſurprized him in his

his camp, but the Roman diſcipline bore down all oppoſition. Ninety thouſand of the Numidians were killed in one battle. Jugurtha had been joined by the forces of his father-in-law, Bocchus, king of Mauritania, but that prince finding that he was not able to oppoſe Marcus, ſent ambaſſadors to Rome to treat of peace, but the ſenate inſiſted that Jugurtha ſhould be delivered up.

Bocchus at firſt ſtartled at ſuch a propoſal, but neceſſity forced him to comply, and Jugurtha was delivered up to Marius in the moſt treacherous manner. The conſul ſent him to Rome, loaded with chains, where he was kept in priſon till the conqueror returned; when the ſenate ordered him to be expoſed, to grace the public triumph, and then he was ſtarved to death. Compaſſion for his innocent brother, whom he had cruelly murdered, induces us to look down upon him with indignation; but when we find the Romans thus in the moſt barbarous manner wreaking their vengeance upon a priſoner, we bleſs that Providence by which we have been placed in an age when the law of nature and nations has been eſtabliſhed on the moſt ſolid baſis, and priſoners are mutually exchanged.

It was remarkable of the Romans that no ſooner had they ſubjected one enemy than another made his appearance, and peace was no ſooner eſtabliſhed, than freſh hoſtilities commenced.

The inhabitants of the north-eaſt part of Germany, then called the Cimbra and the Tewtones, being very numerous, and wanting new habitations, croſſed the Alps, to the number of near three hundred thouſand men.

U. C. 650. The Romans were in the utmoſt conſternation, and therefore, contrary to the common forms, they elected Caius Marius, conſul, to go and command the army againſt the barbarians. Theſe barbarians were ſuch as the Romans had not hitherto engaged with, but notwithſtanding all their ferocity, military diſcipline ſtill triumphed. Their wives fought in chariots, beſides their huſbands; but when they ſaw themſelves in danger of being made priſoners, they murdered their children, whom they had brought along with them, and then murdered each other. This whole formidable army of barbarians was either killed or made priſoners, ſo that Marius ſeemed now at the ſummit of his military glory. But his ambition made him reſtleſs, and Metellus, who had in a manner raiſed him up to a high command in the army, was by him ſingled out for baniſhment, leſt he ſhould one day ſupplant him in the opinion of his fellow citizens.

Marius got an act to paſs, by which the lands that had been taken from the enemy, ſhould be equally divided among the ſoldiers, but when it came to be ratified in the ſenate, Metellus ſpoke againſt it, as a means of reviving their old diſputes, and throwing all things into confuſion. The vaſt popularity of Marius, however, bore down all oppoſition, and Metellus being declared an out-law, was obliged to leave Rome, and go into voluntary baniſhment.

The perſon whom Marius had employed as his tool, was one Saturnius, who had, in conſequence of his intrigues, been elected tribune.

He raiſed tumults in the city againſt all thoſe who oppoſed him as rivals, ſo that the ſenate ordered the conſuls to take care to ſuppreſs riots, and preſerve the

the public peace. Marius was ſtill one of the conſuls, and therefore he found himſelf under an abſolute neceſſity of commanding a large body of the patricians againſt thoſe men whom he had ſpirited up to ſupport his meaſures. The conſpirators took refuge in the capitol, but being in want of all the neceſſaries of life, they were obliged to ſurrender, in hopes that Marius would ſtill continue their friend, but although he promiſed them more than he was able to perform, yet no ſooner did they make their appearance in the forum, than they were all put to death, and the friends of Metellus had ſuch intereſt, that he was recalled from baniſhment.

Marius finding his party thus in a manner almoſt overpowered, pretended that he was under the obligation of going to a famous ſhrine in Aſia, in order to perform a vow, but his deſign was to ſtir up Mithridates to engage in a war with the Romans. This Mithridates was a very powerful prince, and he treated Marius with every mark of reſpect; but although he diſmiſſed him with valuable preſents, yet when he returned to Rome, he found his enemies had triumphed over his party. Druſius inſiſted that peace ſhould be reſtored in the city, but he was ſtabbed by an aſſaſſin, and nothing was to be ſeen but tumults among the people. The knights ſought to be admitted among the ſenators, but the latter, jealous of their power, refuſed to grant that favour; ſo that moſt of the Italian ſtates joined in what was then called the ſocial war. This deſtructive war continued no leſs than two years, with various ſucceſs on both ſides, for the enemies of Rome were as well acquainted with the military art as themſelves. Rutilius, one of the conſuls, was ſlain, and his body being brought to the city, the

people were filled with the utmoſt conſternation, upon which the ſenate ordered for the future that all thoſe who fell in battle ſhould be buried on the ſpot. In the mean time the ſenate reſolved to uſe the moſt lenient meaſures, and therefore not to be too precipitate to irritate either party, ſuch as had not taken up arms, were made free citizens of Rome, and the ſame privilege was offered to all thoſe who would lay down their arms. Theſe terms were complied with by all except the Lucanians and the Samnites, who ſtill kept the field, but Sylla, one of the conſuls, being ſent againſt them, he took all their towns, and obliged them to ſubmit to what terms were moſt agreeable to the ſenate.

The ſenate having by their prudence put an end to theſe inteſtine commotions, reſolved to turn their arms againſt Mithridates already mentioned, who leaving his hereditary dominions in Aſia, had extended his conqueſts over the moſt flouriſhing ſtates in Greece. Riches and power were both united in this prince, but ſeemed only incentives to induce the Romans to find out a pretext for a war. Accordingly, they declared that he had not only ſubdued and oppreſſed many of the ſtates that were under the protection of Rome, but he had ſtirred up Tigranes, king of Armenia, to declare war againſt the commonwealth, and that, on every occaſion, he had ſpoken moſt diſreſpectfully of the ſenate, charging them with avarice, bribery and corruption.

That the army might be put under proper regulations, and the antient military diſcipline kept up, Sylla was made choice of as conſul, and upon him devolved the command of the forces.

Sylla was one of the moſt amiable and the moſt accompliſhed generals that ever took upon him the command of an army. He was modeſt without the leaſt

leaſt degree of meanneſs, and brave without oſtentation. Born of a patrician family, and brought up in the moſt indulgent manner, he loved pleaſure, but never ſuffered it to interfere with his duty, when the intereſts of his country called for his aſſiſtance. He had ſtudied human nature in ſuch a manner, that when he reprimanded any of his officers for neglect of duty, he addreſſed his diſcourſe to their reaſon and their paſſions at the ſame time. He had ſerved with great reputation as quæſtor of the army, under Marius, and he had been prò-conſul during the ſocial war, ſo that he was acquainted with the whole military art.

There was no wonder that the people ſhould form the higheſt hopes of a general, whoſe accompliſhments of every ſort ſeemed to eclipſe all thoſe who had gone before him. He entered upon the command of the army againſt Mithridates, by the almoſt unanimous conſent of his countrymen, and as an object of love to the ſoldiers.

LETTER XXXIV.

THERE is nothing ſo deſtructive to a commonwealth as diſſentions among the commanders of the army. By this the people become enemies to each other, in conſequence of eſpouſing oppoſite intereſts. This will appear evident, when you attend to the future progreſs of the Roman Hiſtory. Marius beheld with indignation his ſervices diſregarded, for thinking that the command of the army would be conferred upon him, he had got every thing ready for his expedition. He was therefore determined to have recourſe to cunning, and for that purpoſe he aſſociated himſelf with one Sulpitius,

pitius, who had been ſome time a tribune of the people, but a man of abandoned morals, and the inveterate enemy of Sylla. By the aſſiſtance of this Sulpitius, Marius called an aſſembly of the people, wherein it was propoſed that all the ſtates in Italy, ſubject to Rome, ſhould be intitled to vote in the forum along with the free citizens, upon which a tumult aroſe, and many on both ſides were killed, among whom was the ſon-in-law of Sylla, who had ſpoke warmly againſt the law. Sylla narrowly eſcaped, for being obliged to take ſhelter in the houſe of his enemy Marius, he next made his eſcape from thence, and went to the army, in order to prepare for his expedition. In the mean time, Marius and Sulpitius carried their point, and an act paſſed that Sylla ſhould reſign the command of the army.

No ſooner had the conſuls conferred the command upon Marius, than he ſent down ſome of his friends to take poſſeſſion in his name, but Sylla refuſed to deliver up his commiſſion, and the ſoldiers put all the meſſengers to death. Nay, ſo much were the ſoldiers attached to their commander, under whom they had fought during the ſocial war, that they inſiſted that he ſhould march immediately to Rome, and deſtroy all thoſe who oppoſed him.

Marius, on the other hand, prepared to meet him, and now the city was one univerſal ſcene of confuſion and uproar. The ſenate ſent out deputies to order Sylla not to come within five miles of the city, but he treated them with contempt, and inſtantly marched his legions into the city, with their ſwords drawn, as if they had taken it from a common enemy. Marius and Sulpitius gathered together as many of the people as they could perſuade to follow them, but after ſome hours fighting with the

the moſt inveterate rancour, Marius, with his party, were obliged to retreat and ſave themſelves by flight.

Sylla, thus maſter of the city, ſet himſelf above the laws, and made ſuch new regulations, as he thought would increaſe his popularity with the ſoldiers, and having apprehended Sulpitius, he ordered his head to be cut off, but Marius ſaved himſelf by flight.

Sylla now thought himſelf ſure of ſucceſs, but while he was amuſing himſelf with vain hopes, Cornelius Cinna, a young patrician, oppoſed him as a candidate for the conſulſhip, and obtained it by a conſiderable majority, for he was now become the favourite of the people. Cinna, although a patrician, yet could never carry any meaſure in the ſenate; and therefore, in order to acquire a name, he reſolved to ingratiate himſelf with the Italian ſtates. We have ſeen what laws were paſſed in their favour by Marius and Sulpitius; but all theſe having been annulled by Sylla, Cinna reſolved to renew them, and for that purpoſe propoſed that a great body of men ſhould be brought into the city with their arms concealed under their cloaths. This propoſal was complied with, and no ſooner was the law mentioned, than they fell upon the Romans with great fury; but Octavius, the other conſul, behaved with ſuch courage, that they were obliged to retreat with diſgrace. But this did not damp the ſpirit of Cinna, who went from place to place, repreſenting the neceſſity the people were under of ſecuring their rights againſt the nobles, who had ſo long domineered over them. He repeated his own ſufferings for the public cauſe with ſo much force of eloquence, that a large body of men took up arms to aſſiſt him, ſo that he reſolved

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to march to Rome, and obtain by force what he could not by intrigue.

In the mean time, the ſenate degraded Cinna from the conſulſhip, and in his room elected Lucius Merula, who at that time was the high prieſt of Jupiter. This, however, did not diſcourage Cinna, who was made conſul by the army, while news was brought him, that Marius, at the head of a great army, was on his march to join him.

Marius was now about eighty years of age, the greateſt part of which had been ſpent in the ſervice of his country, but now he was obliged to take ſhelter in the woods, where he was found by ſome people belonging to a neighbouring ſtate, who diſcovered him, and brought him before the governor who confined him in a dungeon. Superſtition, however, contributed towards ſaving his life; for a Cimbrian ſlave being ſent to kill him, the aged general demanded of the ſlave, with a fierce voice, whether he could preſume to murder Caius Marius. The ſlave was ſo much intimidated, that he threw down his ſword, and went back to inform the governor, who looking upon this as an omen, that he would one day perform ſome great action, gave him his liberty, and a ſhip to carry him to ſome other place.

Embarking on board the ſhip, he landed in Sicily, but being there diſcovered by the Romans, he was again obliged to ſet ſail, and within a few days after, he landed near the ruins of Carthage. There he was again diſcovered, and obliged to leave the place, for the ſenate had proſcribed him in every province where their authority reached.

Thus driven from place to place, he ſent his ſon to ſolicit aſſiſtance from Mandraſtal, an African prince, and in the mean time put to ſea, where he expected

expected every day to periſh, or fall into the hands of the enemy. His ſon did all he could to procure him aſſiſtance, but without effect, ſo that he had only time to ſave himſelf by flight, and return to his diſconſolate father.

It was at this time that Marius received news of Cinna having raiſed an army, and therefore he reſolved to join him. This was moſt joyful news to Cinna, who ſent out his lictors to meet him, but Marius, ever averſe to public ſplendour, deſired them to return, while he went through the different towns to ſolicit aſſiſtance. Great numbers came over to his party, and that nothing might be wanting to procure ſucceſs, he ordered all ſuch ſlaves to be ſet free, as were willing to join the army.

Being thus at the head of a formidable army, he took the city of Oſtia, in order to ſecure a retreat, and ſoon after was joined by Cinna upon Janiculum, a lofty eminence near Rome, and from thence they proceeded to lay ſiege to the city. Sylla was now in Aſia, and the ſenate, not knowing what to do, were reduced to the utmoſt diſtraction. Metellus, who commanded a few legions among the Samnites, was ſent for, but his ſoldiers refuſed to obey, and ſoon after joined themſelves to Cinna and Marius.

Ambaſſadors were ſent to treat about terms of peace with the two generals, but Cinna refuſed to hear any of their propoſals, unleſs they addreſſed themſelves to him as conſul, which they could not do without the conſent of the ſenate. The moſt haughty governors are obliged to comply with the moſt abject terms, when they find themſelves preſſed on every ſide by a powerful enemy, and therefore Cinna being re-inſtated in his conſulſhip, was invited to return to the city, and diſcharge his duty

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as a magiſtrate. Hé was alſo requeſted to take an oath that no man ſhould be put to death, but this he would by no means comply with.

The two generals now propoſed entering the city, and Cinna marched at the head of a large body of forces, but Marius, who had been condemned and proſcribed by a decree of the ſenate, inſiſted, before he entered the gates, that the act ſhould be reverſed, and himſelf reſtored to the enjoyment of his former privileges.

This was only a feint to draw a veil over his intended cruelty, for his mind was filled with reſentment, and as ſoon as he heard that the people were met together, in order to reverſe the decree of his baniſhment, he marched into the city, and murdered all thoſe whom he looked upon as his enemies without giving them liberty to ſpeak one word in their own defence.

The carnage was moſt dreadful, for beſides thoſe of an ordinary rank, Octavius, one of the conſuls, was killed, while Merula, who being afraid of falling into the hands of his moſt inveterate enemy, killed himſelf, and ſeveral of the ſenators were put to death in the moſt barbarous manner, their heads placed upon the forum, and their bodies thrown to the dogs. The cruelties committed by Marius and his ſoldiers were the moſt horrid that could be imagined, for they neither paid regard to age or ſex; and in the general carnage, many of thoſe who had never given him any offence, were deſtroyed along with the others.

He did not long, however, ſurvive theſe cruelties, for having filled the city with blood, he was found dead, not without the moſt violent ſuſpicion that he had laid violent hands upon himſelf. Sylla, who was ſtill in Aſia, heard in what condition his bleeding

ing country was, but he could not immediately return to Italy, for Mithridates having put to the ſword all the Romans whom he could find in his dominions, ſent his general Archelaus againſt Sylla, but he was defeated with great ſlaughter. The Romans being ſtill victorious, Mithridates reſolved to propoſe terms of accommodation, and Sylla was the more ready to liſten to them, as he deſired to return to his own country.

Mithridates was obliged, by this treaty, U. C. to confine himſelf to his hereditary dominions, and to give up all thoſe he had 670. taken by conqueſt, beſides paying the whole expence of the war, and Sylla propoſed returning to Rome. He ſent notice of his intentions to the ſenate, but they were too much under the influence of Cinna, and too much afraid of his power, to do any thing without his conſent. It is true, they endeavoured to get him to join with them in ſupplicating mercy from Sylla, but he knew that he had no reaſon to expect any favour, and therefore he reſolved to raiſe forces in his own defence. He even went ſo far as to ſend an army into Aſia againſt Sylla, under the command of Valerius Flaccus, and Fimbria, who had ſerved his country with great reputation, was to act under him as his lieutenant-general. This, however, had not the deſired effect, for the two generals quarrelled, and Valerius Flaccus diſmiſſed Fimbria from his employment, without being able to aſſign a ſufficient reaſon for it. This occaſioned a mutiny among the ſoldiers, and Valerius was murdered while attempting to make his eſcape. Fimbria ſhared the ſame fate, for no ſooner did Sylla approach than the ſoldiers joined his ſtandard, and the general who had

had diſobeyed his chief, was obliged to take ſhelter in Pergamus, where he was killed by one of his ſlaves.

Cinna being well acquainted with the courage of the general, who wanted to approach to the gates of Rome, reſolved to oppoſe him in his march, and for that purpoſe he embarked an army to ſail for Dalmatia, but part of them were diſperſed by a ſtorm, and the reſt refuſed to embark. This occaſioned a mutiny among the ſoldiers, in which Cinna loſt his life, and the command devolved on Cato, at that time one of the conſuls. Scipio and Urbanus were choſen conſuls for the next year, and as all the lower orders of the people, as well as the patricians, were conſcious that Sylla would not ſhew them any mercy, they reſolved to oppoſe him with an armed force.

For this purpoſe, many of the peaſants from different parts of Italy, flocked to Rome, and inliſted under the conſuls, while Sylla continued to march with the utmoſt rapidity, in order to defeat the ſchemes projected by his enemies. When he arrived at Dyrrhachium, he made an oration to the ſoldiers, and deſired that they would all ſwear to ſtand by him to the laſt. This they conſented to, and as a proof of their ſincerity, offered him all the money they had in order to enable him to carry on the war. Sylla was too generous to accept of their offer, and therefore telling them that he would beſtow greater favours upon them, he embarked on board the fleet, and landed ſafely at Brunduſium.

Soon after his arrival, he was joined by ſuch of the forces as had ſerved under Marius, Cneius, and afterwards Pompey the Great came to him with ſuch a reinforcement, that his army began to make a very formidable appearance. Cneius was now about

about twenty-three years of age, but ſo great was his courage, that in a ſingle combat he ſlew the general of the Gauliſh horſe, and obtained a ſignal victory over Brutus, who commanded a party under the conſuls.

The riches brought by the ſoldiers from Aſia enabled Sylla to have recourſe to intrigue, for when both armies were near coming to a general engagement, Scipio propoſed entering into a negotiation with Sylla, only that he deſired time to conſult with Urbanus, his fellow conſul. In the mean time, Sylla gave his men leave to viſit the oppoſite army, and as they were all countrymen, it was propoſed that the riches ſhould be ſhared between them. This had the deſired effect, for the ſoldiers all reſolved to fight under Sylla, and Scipio, with his ſon, were both made priſoners, before they ſo much as knew any thing of the conſpiracy. Sylla did all he could to bring Scipio over to his party, but as he found that he continued inflexible, he gave him his liberty upon his word of honour, that he would not, during the remainder of the war, take up arms againſt him.

Urbanus, the other conſul, reſolving to avail himſelf of the diſgrace of Scipio, marched his army to attack Sylla, but he was defeated with great ſlaughter, having left ſeveral thouſand men dead on the ſpot, and then, for his own ſafety, was obliged, with the ſhattered remains of his army, to take ſhelter in Capua. Diſtreſs, deſolation, and all the other miſeries of civil war, now ſeemed to threaten Italy, and each party ſought to obtain by corruption what they could not by force. Sylla was loaded with the ſpoils of Aſia, ſo that he was able to bring over a very ſtrong body of people to his aſſiſtance. Cato, the conſul, and young Marius took the field againſt

againſt Sylla, as ſoon as the ſeaſon would permit, and Marius reſolved to engage, though his army was inferior to that of the enemy. Sylla, relying on the courage of his troops, readily accepted of the propoſal, and both armies met together with all the rancour ſo conſpicuous in thoſe who are engaged in a domeſtic war. Sylla obtained a great victory, and Marius, after having done all he could to bring on his troops to a ſecond charge, was obliged to take ſhelter in Prænesſte, where he was blocked up, while Sylla marched with his army to infeſt Rome. Rome was in a manner depopulated by famine, and therefore the gates being ſet open to the conqueror, he entered without the leaſt reſiſtance, and marched directly to the forum.

The people being aſſembled, he told them that neceſſity obliged him to take the meaſures he did, but they need not be under any apprehenſions, for no injury ſhould be done to thoſe who behaved in a peaceable manner; and, in the mean time, having ſold the goods of ſuch as had left their habitations, and diſtributed the money among the people, he returned with the army to beſiege Marius.

Marius, who ſeems to have inherited by nature the vindictive ſpirit of his father, ſent orders to Rome, deſiring Brutus to put all thoſe to death who adhered to Sylla, and in conſequence thereof, many ſenators, as well as others, were murdered in cool blood, ſo that the city exhibited an univerſal ſcene of ſlaughter. So true is that obſervation, "that whatever may be the views of tyrants, or "in whatever manner they may conduct their ope-"rations, the innocent are in the end made the "ſufferers."

Carbo did all he could to relieve Marius, but his forces were defeated by Pompey, and ſoon after

Urbanus

Urbanus meeting with the ſame fate, killed himſelf, while Carbo fled to Africa, where he was diſcovered, and given up to Pompey, who cauſed him to be beheaded, in order to ingratiate himſelf the more with Sylla, whoſe good conduct and the valour of his troops, had ſtill followed him, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition that had been made to him.

In the mean time, Teleſinus, one of the Samnites, raiſed a petty army of his countrymen, and being joined by many of the Romans, he reſolved either to deliver Marius, or periſh in the attempt. On this occaſion, the general of the Samnites diſplayed as much prudence and courage as ever diſtinguiſhed the greateſt heroes of antiquity, for being informed that Pompey was coming to attack him in the rear, while Sylla engaged him in the front, he led off his forces, and encamped them within ſight of Rome.

Rome was now in a moſt deplorable condition: it was divided againſt itſelf, and its deſtruction ſeemed in a manner inevitable. Teleſinus was not ignorant of the inteſtine diviſions in the city, and not doubting but the party of Sylla had been greatly weakened, he reſolved to force the gates by ſtorm. Appius Claudius oppoſed him with all the force he could raiſe, but he was ſlain after he had fought in the moſt gallant manner. At that inſtant the whole army of Sylla made its appearance, and a general engagement enſued, which continued a whole day with great fury, till the Samnites, finding that they were not able to renew the charge, were obliged to march off, and leave Sylla maſter of the field.

Marius and Carinus, two of the generals, who had commanded the army of the Samnites, were made priſoners, and being brought to Sylla, he ordered their heads to be cut off, and then carried

on poles round the walls of Præneſte, which ſo intimidated the people that they all reſolved to ſurrender, but the cruel conqueror who had them now in his power, put all the males to death. Marius, in company with one of the captains of the Samnites, attempted to make his eſcape through a ſubterranean paſſage, but finding that altogether impracticable, they laid violent hands on themſelves, and in that condition were found next morning by the enemy.

Sylla was now maſter of all Italy, except the city of Naba, which he inveſted, and the inhabitants, rather than ſubmit to him, ſet fire to their houſes, and voluntarily periſhed in the flames. He then entered Rome in triumph, amidſt the acclamations of the giddy thoughtleſs multitude, and might have reigned in ſafety had his moderation been equal to his valour, or had he known as well how to direct the affairs of government in the cabinet, as to command in the field.

That unbounded ambition, which was the predominant principle in his heart, had been hitherto concealed under the maſk of patriotiſm, but now he began to appear in his proper colours. He dictated every thing to the people in the moſt arbitrary manner, and even inſiſted, that all thoſe who had taken up arms againſt him ſhould be put to the ſword by his own partiſans. Eight thouſand of thoſe unhappy wretches were put to death in one day, whilſt Sylla was harranging the ſenate on his great lenity to thoſe who were enemies to the commonwealth. A great number of the ſenators, with many of the knights, were, by his order, proſcribed, and the children of all thoſe who had been engaged in the oppoſite party againſt him. Nay, he even went ſo far as to offer rewards to children

children to murder their parents, and however ſhocking it may appear to men endowed with humanity, yet certain it is, that children came and claimed the ſtipulated rewards for the murder of their parents. In ſhort, nothing but deſolation was to be ſeen in every corner of Rome, where parents were murdering their children, and children their parents; ſo that the whole was one univerſal ſcene of anarchy and confuſion, none knowing to whom they were under obligations to pay ſpecial obedience.

A citizen, whoſe name was Aurelius, was murdered in cold blood, for no other reaſon, but that Sylla had an eye to his country houſe in Alba, which he had finiſhed in the moſt elegant manner. The brother of Marius was put to the moſt cruel tortures, for his eyes were put out, and his legs cut off, and in that manner, he expired under the moſt excruciating agonies.

The ſame cruelties were executed throughout every part of the Roman empire, and Sylla reigned in a more arbitrary manner than ever Tarquinus did before him. The people looked upon themſelves as devoted to deſtruction; they had ſhaken off one yoke of bondage in order to make way for another, and whatever ſucceſs attended the arms of the conqueror, the lower claſſes of the people were ſure to be oppreſſed.

Sylla imagined that nothing could put a ſtop to his ambition, and therefore he continued his cruelties with the moſt unabating fury. He graſped at univerſal empire, and even that could not have ſatisfied his ambition: but vain are all the ſchemes that can be formed by tyrants, when the people begin to know the nature of their own importance, and aſſert that right to which they are entitled in human ſociety.

LET-

LETTER XXXV.

WE are now drawing near to that period, when the Romans, who had been ſubject to every form of government, and were diſcontented with all, reſolved to throw themſelves into the boſom of deſpotic power. Sylla had got every thing at his diſpoſal, and not content with his uſurped authority, he made the people acknowledge him dictator, which office he was to enjoy till the pretended grievances were redreſſed.

He ſquandered away the public money in the moſt profuſe manner, to reward thoſe who ſupported his meaſures, and beſides adding three hundred knights to the ſenate, he ordèred ten thouſand ſlaves to be ſet free. Pompey, in order to ingratiate himſelf with the dictator, repudiated his wife, and married Sylla's grand-daughter, while Crœſus, to gratify his covetous diſpoſition, bought up the eſtates of ſuch as had been proſcribed. At that juncture, the famous Julius Cæſar, who had married the daughter of Cinna, began to make his appearance on the theatre of action, and Sylla attempted to bring him over to his party; but the young Roman had too much honour, and therefore went into voluntary exile.

Sylla, having thus executed every act of cruelty and deſpotiſm, reſolved to lay down the enſigns of office, and ſpend the remainder of his days in retirement. This ſtrange reſolution, which ſurpriſed the whole body of the people, he actually put

put in execution, and ſoon afterwards died of a mortification in his bowels, at his country ſeat. He was a man of great abilities, both in war and in peace, and at the ſame time he was ambitious and cruel. All that can be ſaid in his defence is this, that the Romans were ſuch a turbulent people, he was obliged to uſe means inconſiſtent with the character of a hero, and this we may preſume he did upon the principles of ſelf-preſervation. He had cauſed the body of the great Marius to be taken out of its grave, and thrown into the river Anio; and fearing that the ſame indignity ſhould be offered to his own, he deſired his friends to burn it to aſhes, a practice that afterwards became univerſal among the Romans.

It ſeems now to have been the determined reſolution of the greateſt generals among the Romans to contend for the ſovereignty of the world. Lepidus, one of the conſuls, having differed in opinion from his colleague, ſet off for Gaul, of which province he was governor, and having raiſed an armed force, he croſſed the Alps, in order to force the ſenate to make him as abſolute as Sylla had been before. Pompey and Catulus were ſent to oppoſe him, and a bloody battle enſued, in which Lepidus was defeated, and ſoon afterwards he ended his days in the iſland of Sardinia, where he had fled for refuge.

In the mean time Seſtorius, a brave commander, who had been baniſhed by order of Sylla, found refuge in Spain, where he ſet up a ſort of commonwealth, and acted with ſuch prudence and moderation that he became an object of veneration to the barbarous, though warlike inhabitants. Finding his party beginning to increaſe, he reſolved to invade Italy, upon which the ſenate ſent Pompey at the

head of ſeveral legions to oppoſe his future progreſs; but before they could come to a general engagement, Perpenna, the lieutenant of Seſtorius murdered his maſter, and ſoon after was himſelf taken priſoner by Pompey. Perpenna, in order to ſave his own life, delivered up to Pompey all the papers belonging to Seſtorius; but no ſooner had the gallant conqueror found that they contained ſuch matter as would have involved ſeveral of the patrician families in ruin, than he ordered them all to be burnt, and the traitor was publickly executed.

Pompey having quieted the fears of the ſenators with reſpect to the apprehenſions they were under from the warlike preparations he had been making, reſolved to return to Rome; and in his way thither he met a body of ſlaves who had taken up arms againſt the commonwealth, and totally defeated them. He then advanced to Rome, where he was received in the moſt pompous manner, as one who had put an end to the civil wars, by which the country had been in a manner depopulated.

The diſſentions that took place among the Roman people had not prevented them from cultivating the arts and ſciences, as appears from the writings of Lucretius, Terence and Plautus, who flouriſhed about this period, and carried the Latin language to ſuch an height as had been hitherto unknown.

U. C. 680. The example that Sylla had ſet to the great, was a powerful motive towards encouraging ambition. Pompey had acquired great reputation as a military commander, ſo that he began to aſpire at the ſovereignty, which induced Crœſus, who had never been much accuſtomed to arms, in conſequence of his riches, to have recourſe

recourſe to bribery and corruption. Theſe two powerful rivals hated each other to ſuch a degree, that nothing was done by the one which the other did not attempt to ſet aſide for the love of their country, although the ſole pretence was no more than a ſecondary conſideration. Crœſus endeavoured to ingratiate himſelf with the people by beſtowing favours on ſuch as were in the moſt neceſſitous circumſtances, while Pompey conciliated their affections by the glare of military honour.

A body of pirates had for ſome time infeſted the coaſt of Italy, and it was declared, though with only a ſmall majority in the ſenate, that Pompey ſhould be appointed commander in chief to ſuppreſs them. His ſucceſſes were equal to the hopes that the people had formed of him, and in leſs than two months the pirates were totally defeated, and obliged to accept of mercy upon the conditions propoſed to them by the conqueror, which were, that they ſhould be diſperſed throughout the different provinces of the empire.

Every thing ſeemed now to give way to Pompey, and as he was the favourite of the people, Manilius, one of the tribunes, propoſed that he ſhould be intruſted with the whole government of Aſia, in order to carry on the war againſt Mithridates and Tigranes. The ſenate could not diſſemble their reſentment againſt a man that ſeemed to threaten an end of their privileges; but the great Cicero, who now, for the firſt time, made his appearance as an orator, ſpoke with ſuch force of elocution in favour of Pompey, that he was inveſted with the ſovereign authority in as large and uncontroulable a manner as ever it had been formerly held by Sylla.

No ſooner was Pompey inveſted with the command of the army, than he made the neceſſary preparations, and ſet out for Aſia. Mithridates was a powerful enemy, for although Sylla had forced him to make peace on very diſhonourable terms, yet no ſooner had that hero returned to Italy than he took up arms and drove the Romans out of his dominions.

U. C. 682. It is true Lucellus, a very able general, had been ſent to command an army againſt him, and a bloody battle enſued, in which the Romans were victorious, and Mithridates made his eſcape in a ſhip. He was not however in the leaſt afraid to renew the war, but he was again driven from home, and fled to Aremenia. Lucellus was near putting an end to the war, when he was diſplaced by an order from the ſenate, and Mithridates once more regained the provinces that had been taken from him. Such was the ſtate of affairs in Aſia when Pompey went thither, and he reſolved to act with valour, prudence, and moderation. It was not long before an engagement enſued, and Pompey being victorious, purſued Mithridates as far as the river Euphrates. He had not time to attempt to croſs the river, and his army were ſo much ſunk in effeminacy that they refuſed to renew the engagement. In that diſtreſſed ſituation he put himſelf at the head of eight hundred horſe, and by a bold effort of courage, he made his way through the Roman camp, leaving the greateſt part of his horſemen dead on the ſpot. This was the ſevereſt blow that he had hitherto ſuſtained; but ſtill his ſpirits were not broken. For ſome days he wandered in the deſerts, leading his horſe in his hand, till meeting with a ſmall party of his army, that had made their eſcape from the battle,

battle, they conducted him to the place where he had depoſited the magazines of arms and proviſions.

He then ſent for aſſiſtance to Tigranes, king of Armenia, but he not being able to afford him any, he was obliged to take ſhelter in Colchis, but not being ſafe there, he croſſed the Araxes, and ſtimulated the barbarians in Scythia to join in ſupporting his cauſe.

This great prince, who ſeems to have been formed for war, reſolved to march into Europe, and raiſe an army of barbarians in Germany, whom he intended to lead acroſs the Alps, and ſo carry the war into Italy. But all his deſigns proved abortive, by the effeminacy of his ſoldiers, and the treachery of his ſons, who had conſpired to deliver him up to the Romans. Finding himſelf in danger of being betrayed, he imprecated a moſt dreadful curſe upon his ſons, and then calling his wives and domeſtics together, he told them that they might chuſe whether they would be ſlaves to the Romans, or die by poiſon. They all voluntarily conſenting to die rather than be ſlaves, drank the poiſon and expired. Mithridates ſeeing them dead, he got one Bitæus, a ſoldier, to diſpatch him. Such was the end of one of the greateſt men, and the moſt formidable enemy that ever oppoſed the Roman arms. He had carried on a war againſt them twenty-five years, and although his ſucceſſes were not always the ſame, yet there was no manner of difference in his courage: it ſhone conſpicuous to the laſt.

The defeat of Mithridates was followed by that of Tigranes, whom Pompey ſubdued, and then marched his army over mount Taurus, nothing being able to reſiſt the courage and diſcipline of the Romans. The Medes, the Syrians, and the Parthians, were all obliged to ſue for peace, and

Pompey having marched his army through part of Arabia, he haſtened towards Jeruſalem, in order to attack that antient and celebrated city. Ariſtobulus had depoſed his brother Hyrcanus from the high prieſt-hood, and to defend himſelf againſt Pompey, he fortified the city, which ſuſtained a ſiege of three months. At laſt it was taken, and twelve thouſand of the inhabitants put to the ſword. Pompey, ſtimulated by curioſity, went into the temple, and viſited the holy of holies, obſerving every thing with the moſt reverential awe. He would not ſuffer his ſoldiers to meddle with any thing in the temple, ſo great was the reſpect ſhewn by heathens to places ſet apart for divine worſhip.

Pompey having thus extended the Roman power over the greateſt nations in the eaſt, prepared to return to Rome, in order to obtain the applauſe of his countrymen.

His triumphal entry into his native city, was the moſt ſplendid that the Romans had ever beheld. Ariſtobulus, high-prieſt and king of the Jews, in whoſe room Pompey had placed his brother Hyrcanus, was led to grace the triumph, together with the kings of Comagena, Iberia, and Albania, the ſiſter of Mithridates, and the ſon of Tigranes. He had alſo hoſtages from many other nations, and a ſum of money, amounting to four millions ſterling, beſides an immenſe quantity of riches, that dazzled the eyes of the ſpectators.

Rome was now in as great a ſtate of glory as riches could make it, but thoſe riches enervated the manners of a people long accuſtomed to war. It is true, their liberties had been long in a fluctuating ſtate, owing to the various revolutions in their different forms of government, but now their ruin was in a manner compleated, and inevitable deſtruction.

ſtruction was impending. Thus we find that every ſtate has its riſe, its grandeur, and declenſion, and theſe important events happen in ſo imperceptible a manner, that we ſeldom diſcover them till it is too late to repair the loſs.

Indeed, a diſcerning perſon who attends to the ſtudy of hiſtory, will never want proper materials for enlarging his mind, and judging of the ſtate of that nation wherein he lives. The ſtudy of civil hiſtory ſerves to illuſtrate the beauty of Divine Providence; and the riſe and fall of empires, if the cauſes are properly attended to, are among the moſt important leſſons that can be learned.

But ſtill we meet with none among the antient republics, who roſe in the ſame manner as Rome. The Perſians acquired grandeur by the benevolence and valour of their princes, and they roſe to be ſovereigns of the eaſtern world long before they knew any thing of luxury. But no ſooner had that vice contaminated their minds, than they became an eaſy prey to every invader.

When the Perſians, as a body of people, were in their infant ſtate, ſome diviſions aroſe among them, though none that were of an important nature, but while they were on the decline, they ſeemed to be all united, for luxury enervated their minds, and ſunk them beneath the dignity of rational creatures. Nay, they were ſo mean, and ſo deſtitute of the leaſt ſpark of laudable ambition, that the men often ſat ſpinning among the women, and conſequently forgot the art of war, and became unable to ſuſtain the dangers attending it.

Different, indeed, was the ſtate of antient Greece, and ſtill more that of the kingdoms that aroſe out of Alexander's conqueſts.

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The Grecian ſtates were ſmall, and their government was ſuited to their genius. Lively in their imagination, the people not only acquired the knowledge of literature, but they even brought human ſcience to a ſtate of perfection unknown in former times. For many ages the Grecian ſtates were united in one common cauſe, when attacked by a foreign enemy; but at laſt they became weak by their own civil diſſentions. The power of the Macedonians encreaſed as that of the Greeks became weak, and at laſt Alexander ſwallowed up thoſe ſtates which had for many ages made the moſt diſtinguiſhing figure on the theatre of the world.

But Alexander's conqueſts were ſcarce obtained, before he loſt them, or rather he fell a ſacrifice to his inordinate deſires. By that event taking place, the empire formed, or rather acquired by him, was ſplit into different parts, and the Greek language was thereby learned by the inhabitants of the eaſtern countries. In this the Divine Providence ſhone more conſpicuous than in any other inſtance we meet with in civil hiſtory. A language that had been long conſidered as the moſt polite in the univerſe, ſpread itſelf throughout great part of Aſia; and as the ſtates that cultivated it began to fall to decay, ſo they were eaſily ſubdued by the Romans, and in general, two languages were ſpoken by moſt of the inhabitants of that extenſive empire.

Let us now attend to the means by which the Romans conquered the world, for in peruſing their hiſtory, it would ſeem that they rather ſought to deſtroy their city than to promote their intereſt. That the people wiſhed for liberty is certain, but then they ſought it in an improper manner. The Agrarian and Licinian laws rather coloured over with the moſt plauſible appearances, were a ſpecies

of

of ſlavery under the name of freedom. There is an abſolute neceſſity that ſome men in every ſtate ſhould have a laudable ambition to excel the vulgar in their actions, and in conſequence thereof, it is equally neceſſary, that proper rewards ſhould be beſtowed upon them.

By the Licinian law none of the Romans were to purchaſe any more than a certain quantity of land, but that was a reſtraint that ſeemed utterly inconſiſtent with true policy, and contrary to the natural rights of mankind. Were it not for a principle of ambition in the human mind, great actions would never be performed, nor could commerce be extended unleſs thoſe who acquired riches were permitted to purchaſe land, the moſt valuable of all ſorts of property. On the other hand, the Agrarian law was no leſs inequitable, for with what propriety can it be aſſerted, that the ſhare of each man ſhould be the ſame. This would be to level all diſtinctions, and ſo deſtroy the order of ſociety, by making every one of thoſe equal to the magiſtrates, who are not fit for ſuch a ſtation.

It was much the ſame with reſpect to their reſtleſs diſpoſition in the choice of magiſtrates; for in all their elections, nothing was to be ſeen but intrigues, and ſcarce had their magiſtrates entered upon their different offices, than the people began to murmur, and inſiſted that ſome other form of government ſhould take place.

But, the moſt remarkable thing we meet with in the Roman commonwealth, is, that notwithſtanding their continual diſſentions at home, yet they extended their conqueſts throughout the greateſt part of the then known world. This can be aſcribed to nothing leſs than a latent principle in the heart that contained the ſeeds of glory, and only wanted a

proper

proper ſoil to ripen them. They did not ſeem to know their own importance as a collective body, and they had too high an opinion of it as individuals. If their natural and political intereſt had been thoroughly underſtood, they would have fixed upon ſome regular plan of government on a laſting foundation, and not kept the ſtate in a continual ferment by one change after another.

The only advantage that aroſe from theſe changes ſeems to have been the following. The Romans were a reſtleſs people, and when they could not find an enemy abroad, they were ſure to make one at home. This kept up a martial ſpirit among them, and while they were entering into cabals and intrigues to ſupport ſome favourite meaſure, they were learning to conquer the world. It is certain, they carried the knowledge of the military art to a great height, and it can only be aſcribed to their fighting with each other, and the neceſſity they were under to defend their own territories againſt the incurſions of their neighbours.

Some of the beſt writers on government have aſſerted, that there is a period, when a nation is at its utmoſt point of grandeur, but experience convinces us that that period cannot be eaſily aſcertained. Much has been ſaid in praiſe of ſome of the periods of which we have already treated, but for all that, very little to the purpoſe. For, from what has been ſaid, it will appear, that the Romans roſe to the ſovereignty of the world gradually, and in the ſame manner ſunk into obſcurity.

In vain do we talk of the tyranny of the kings, the combinations formed by the decemviri, the unlimited power of the dictators, and what was worſe than either of them, the conſuls abuſe of that power repoſed in them, and the manner in which the tribunes

tribunes promoted diſſentions among the people. All that we can learn from ſuch fluctuations, is, that no form of government can be ſo perfect, as not to admit of abuſe creeping in, and that none can be ſo bad as a popular one.

From an attentive peruſal of the Roman Hiſtory, the ſtudent will find ſome things common with the riſe and fall of all other republics, and ſome things peculiar to themſelves.

Firſt, like all other nations, they roſe from an obſcure original, nay, roſe to grandeur before they knew the nature of their own importance.

Secondly, like all other barbarous nations, they had the ſeeds of liberty implanted in the nature of their conſtitution and as frugality and temperance kept it alive, ſo luxury deſtroyed it.

Thirdly, in common with all other nations in a ſtate of barbarity, their government often changed its form without being of any ſervice to the people. But again, there are ſome things in which there is a material difference between them and all other nations, not only thoſe conquered by them, but alſo thoſe that remained unconquered.

Firſt, they became united upon principles of ſelf-intereſt, and while that unity was maintained, its principal ſupport was religion and pride. By religion, I mean ſuperſtition, and by pride, that attachment to their native country, which induced them to look upon all thoſe who lived in the diſtant provinces as no better than barbarians.

Secondly, their country, although ſmall, was fertile, and able to have ſatisfied all their wants, eſpecially, ſuch as were of a reaſonable nature; but ſuch was their ambition, or rather ſuch was the deſign of providence, that they firſt extended their conqueſts

conqueſts over the neighbouring ſtates of Italy, and then throughout every part of the known world.

Thirdly, although united by intereſt, and bound to promote the rights of each other as individuals, and that of the ſtate, as a collective body, yet they were continually ſplitting into parties, and when they had no foreign enemy to oppoſe, nothing but diſturbances were to be met with in every part of the city.

Fourthly, in contradiction to the practice of all other nations, theſe diſſentions inſpired them with courage, and made them perform the greateſt actions, for no other reaſon, but that of obtaining the approbation of their fellow citizens.

Laſtly, ambition, which was the conſtitutional vice of the whole community, began to operate ſtrongly on the minds of individuals, and after ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts, regal government was eſtabliſhed on the ruins of that which had exiſted before, though not without ſuch ſtruggles as are common in ſimilar caſes.

Such are the principal things that ought to be attended to in ſtudying the Roman Hiſtory, and by that, the young gentleman will be able to comprehend its riſe, grandeur and declenſion.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.